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"MOTHER!" ELLA WAS AT HER SIDE. GRASPING THE CLENCHED HANDS, HER OWN SWEET
FACE DISTORTED WITH FEAR.

THE LITTLE HEIRESS; Or, UNDER A CLOUD.

BY MRS. MARY A. DENISON.

CHAPTER I.

TIM BUMBLE AND THE NEW-COMERS.

"Oh! Miss Arty, why do ye be after t'asing

me for stories all the time? Sure, isn't me head intirely dry wid the dumb-ager? Do be quiet an' good, Miss Arty, while I mend this net. If it isn't done by sundown, it's the most illigant scolding Mither Richard 'll give me, like a true gentleman as he is. Now, what d'ye t'ase for?"

"Oh! Bumbledyhum, you do tell such nice stories!" cried the child, scraping handfuls of fine, white sand, and throwing it upward, from whence it came down again in cloud showers.

"Sure, yer hair 'll be that consistency paste 'll be nowhere beside it," said the man, looking up for a moment, and wincing as the wind-swept particles whirled toward his eyes. "It's too nice, intirely, to be makin' a sieve of, that way, an' if it works through into the brains, it 'll give you, may-be, what little Patsy died with."

"That was the dropsy—oh! now you're going to tell me a story, I know; but, Bumbledyhum, it's water makes dropsy, not sand."

"And isn't sand water's first cousin, sure? Ain't we right on the water's edge, and don't the sand run with it? Stands to reason, Arty, that—that—"

"Well, say—what is it?"

"That they're relashuns, honey; the dropsy and the wather, and the sand,—and so—howly Saints! I've run the net-hook into my j'int. Oh! glory, the pain of it, and you a-laughin', Miss Arty."

"How can I help it, Bumbledyhum, to hear you cry glory, like old Auntie Upham, the Methodist, and all because you hurt yourself—oh! how funny. Why, how the blood does run!" and the beautiful child-face put on a commiserating look.

"Yis, miss, it's a clear strame, it is," said the man, pressing the wounded finger.

"I'll go call Coraline—she knows everything," and away the child flew over the shining sand.

It was the bank of a pleasant river, sweeping round in a bright half-circle, the soft, blue water changing and curling as it crept cosily up over the white sand. The banks further on the right were hung with vines, now bright with scarlet berries, and tall pines, whispering together, looked down with a protecting air upon them. Crowning this high stood a grand mansion, upon which the sun struck dazzlingly, throwing flakes of gold on the high, wide windows, burnishing the roof-tops, and making splendor where otherwise there had been the sorry display of brick and mortar. The grounds did not show from the spot where the man still sat nursing his wounded finger; but the little that could be seen gave evidence of great cultivation and no common taste. At the bottom of the hill, and from which led a gradually ascending road, stood a very gem of a bath-house, over which bent a solitary weeping willow of great size and beauty. Near this pleasant place, beneath the shades of the pensile branches, a young girl of fifteen or sixteen sat reading. She was too much absorbed in her story to see aught that was passing around her; even that the waters were lavishing white jewels at her very feet, and sparkling all over with opals and diamonds. Coraline Reynolds was what all who knew her called a lovely girl, sufficiently pretty to please by her sweet face, affectionate, with dignity enough to make her seem a very queen when the occasion required. She was a favorite with every person in the village, from the white-robed rector to the blundering net-mender, seated on the sand, and whom Arty had dignified with the name of Bumbledyhum.

Coraline was started out of her dreaming at last, by hearing her name often called, and be-

holding, at no great distance, her little sister flying over the beach.

"Oh! Corry, do stop that reading," cried the child. "Bumbledyhum has cut himself almost to death. I mean he's cut his finger awfully," she added, seeing her sister's cheek grow quite white; "no, not cut, but run the net-hook clear through bone and all, and you ought to see how it's bleeding! Do come quick—poor Bumble!"

"How you frightened me, Arty, with your extravagance! You know how wrong it is to make things seem worse than they are." This the sister said, as she hurried along by the side of the child, keeping up with her nimble feet.

"Well, what could I do? there it was bleeding and bleeding, and just as he was going to tell me a story, too—one of his splendid stories, all about ghosts, you know—and—there, see; it's bleeding now."

"An' sure, Miss Arty, there's no need o' scaring the young lady; it's nothing, miss, but a flesh-woun' through the bony part of the finger, an' it'll stop when Providence plazes." The young girl went up the shore a little way, and returned in a moment with thick rolls of cobwebs, which she had found in the bushes, and which soon stanchd the blood that had been flowing so freely.

"An' it's many thanks I owe ye," said the man. "By me faith, there's goings on at the Grove, sure."

Coraline turned in the direction he pointed. She could see two persons on horseback, riding from the house. A gay plume streamed from the hat of the lady, and the gentleman beside her bestrode a magnificent black horse, whose sides shone glossily as he came leisurely on.

"I heard that the Lattisons were coming," said Coraline. "They must be a part of the family, come over to look at the premises."

"They are riding this way," said Arty.

Coraline walked slowly toward the water, apparently unobserved, while Arty who thought of nothing long, began tossing up the sand again, and teasing Bumbledyhum for a story.

"Well, I don't know any story, then, except about the Lattisons," said the man, who was at work upon the net again, holding the finger, upon which an immense black bunch was now visible, very carefully.

"Oh! what is it about them?" queried Arty, watching the coming figures very curiously.

"Whist! take your eyes over this way, it's nothing I have to tell, savin' an' except it's a quare family, wid a craziness running around in it."

"A craziness! What do you mean, Bumbledyhum?"

"What I say, to be sure. The boys in that family 'ave always kicked up a boderation with themselves, makin' folks mighty oneasy, such as drownin', an' bein' fished out o' lakes an' rivers in this an' furren countries. It's very quare, to be sure, for if a body 'ave riches and all the fruits of the airth an' the fishes of the sea, an' the fowls of the air, to keep him in spirits, and make him a gentleman, there's sure to be a black skelington in the bottom of his trunk. But, whist! I tell ye, now—they're

clos't upon us, and they'll hear. Sure, it's no purtier faces I've seen, savin' that of Miss Coraline, and Mr. Francis, an' your own."

The horses' hoofs now sounded near, and quiet voices spoke of the beauty of the scene. Coraline still advanced very slowly toward the water's edge, never turning her head; she was too well-bred for that. The young couple, very young and handsome, looked that way, especially the youth, attracted, no doubt, by the golden beauty of the curls, blown from under the hat, and the graceful contour of the figure. Bumble, as he called himself, (and his name was Tim Bumble) respectfully raised his apology for a "straw b'aver," while the young lady bowed and smiled toward little Arty, who was really a beautiful child.

"Now do you know any story about them?" queried Arty, turning again toward the Irishman.

"Oh, whist! there was a man once got married there!"

"Well, go on—do go on," cried the child, impatiently.

"What'll I go on for? Sure, isn't that the end of all stories?"

"But not of this one, I'm sure. Come, now, Bumbledyhum."

"Plaze, Miss Arty, I wouldn't tell you that story for a hundred dollars," said Bumble, solemnly.

"Yes you would—yes you will—come, go on, now. I'll give you—oh! Bumbledyhum, I'll give you a hundred dollars some time, if you will."

"Ah! miss, it'll be a good many years before you do that, an' when I git it, I'll be, mabbe, in my grave, for you'll not have the money to give as you plaze till you're a grown woman. But I'll jest say somethin' of it, though I'll be givin' no names. The young gentleman was the han'somest man ye iver laid eyes on, and as good as he was han'some. The young lady was like one of the argels, an' I've seen a picture of the howly Virgin looked jist like her, almost. Well, they had a gran' weddin'—for I was there an' seen it. They had tables set out 'way down here. I mane 'way down on the place, that was as like this as two peas, for a river run jist as this does, an' all the poor people feasted. Saying down there was a hollow, which there is a hollow, as yer young eyes can see—an' saying there was a fire there, which even now the dead ashes is seen some time, or leastwise use to, and saying ye saw one of the biggest oxes, and lots of pigs all roasting away for the poor people. Oh! but it ware a gran' time, to be follered by tribelation, surely, for the next mornin' the poor bridegroom an' his bride were all dead intirely—dead an' murdered!"

"Oh, who could do it?" cried the child, creeping close up to the Irishman, with eyes distended; "who could do such an awful thing?"

"Well, it's thought, of coorse, as the young man he did it himself, being crazy-like, and so all the happiness at the house where it all tuk place, was gone forever. Oh! it was a terrible thing, to be sure!"

"And who was he, Bumbledyhum?"

"Ah! that, I said, I shouldn't tell at all; and

ye mustn't ask me, for the thing is hushed and buried long ago, for the prisent young man of the family was a babby then in 'is cradle, and is likely niver heard of it at all."

"I wouldn't care any thing about the story if I couldn't know," said Arty, with a child's pertinacity. "I'll ask mother when I go home, if she can tell me."

"And if ye do, Miss Arty, it's the last story I'll ever tell ye, as I've said many's the time afore, and repented my promise; but I'll stick to it this time, ye may well believe."

"But you said a craziness run through the Lattison family. Ah, Mr. Bumble, I've got you; I know who it was!"

"Ye're wrong intirely," (the howly Virgin forgive the lie, he muttered to himself;) "it's another family of the same name as were traveling in Italy at the time. Now where are ye, Miss Arty? where are ye now, lady-bird?" he cried, triumphantly, as the child stared with a puzzled face.

"Pooh! I don't care, anyway. I guess it's only one of your make-up stories. But, Bumbledyhum, are the Lattisons really coming to the Grove?"

"Really and for certain," responded the Irishman; "and a great family it is, and a great house is the Grove. But they'll give no more parties, for the place is sadly run down—I mane the family is badly give out. There, my mindin' is done, an' the net is as good as new. Wait till the first moonlight, Miss Arty. I'll give you a rockin' in the boat to go out an' see us ketch shad. Sure an' it's Mr. Richard shall have the first, providin' it's the fattest."

So saying, the man arose, shook himself like a great dog, and gathered up the net. Arty bothered him a little, running under the meshes, and getting her hair tangled in them, but Bumble was a good-natured fellow, and bore it all with patience, for the child's interesting face and gleeful laugh showed that she did it more for fun than to tease him. By this time Coraline was ready to go home.

The house of Mr. Richard Reynolds was situated a quarter of a mile from the river, in front of a beautiful grove. It was of a convenient size, and looked like a gentleman's residence. From its door-steps could be seen the place called the Grove, and which, for nearly ten years, had been vacant, the family sojourning in Europe. For some months it had been rumored that the Lattisons were about returning, and the premises through which the three children of Mr. Reynolds had been accustomed to ramble at will—for they gained the good wishes of the housekeeper—were now subjected to the hand of improvement. They were not over-pleased with the expectation of strange faces until they found that some of the occupants were of their own age. These were Harrison Lattison, a boy of seventeen, and Anne, his sister, a sweet little blonde, with melancholy blue eyes, but a laugh that was worth hearing.

The Grove-house was surrounded by chestnut-trees, and its situation was commandingly beautiful. It had been built by a French refugee seventy years before, and formed a striking contrast to the light, elegant, cheerful cottage

of the Reynolds'. The principal apartments, parlors, drawing-rooms and guest chambers were very large and handsome, needing only new painting and papering. The rest of the house was cut up into oddly-shaped places, like closets, leading from one to another, and in which much of the broken furniture remained.

The Lattisons, when they came from the hotel in the city, brought a great deal of splendid household plenishing, and servants in abundance, all of whom were old and well trained. It seemed, after a while, as if everything about the place went by clock-work. The gardeners soon reduced the weedy lawn to order and beauty, and planted new ground with choice fruits and flowers. Anne and her brother were often seen walking over the place, or riding through the avenues, or on the shore. Though the sister was the youngest, and looked even more childish than she was, by reason of her extreme delicacy, she seemed ever to have a watchful care over her tall, handsome brother. Wherever he was, she was sure to follow, and whatever he did, to applaud.

It was some time—to the Reynoldses an age—before the two families became acquainted. On no account could they have made the first advances; but morning and night they thought and talked about them, wondering what their pursuits were, how they were educated and what their future plans would be. At last their dearest wish was gratified. Mrs. Lattison and her neighbors met by chance, were each pleased with the other, and, waving all formality, the mistress of the Grove called upon Mrs. Reynolds, who was an invalid. The young man, with his sister, accompanied her; and of course Coraline and Francis were soon on the best of terms with them. Mrs. Lattison was a small, quiet woman, with a sorrowful face. She looked care-worn, and though, judging from her children, she must once have been beautiful, was not so now. The soft hair that waved gracefully on each side of the fair forehead was tinged with gray. The eyes wore that heavy fatigued look that suggests the possibility of frequent weeping, and her voice was a plaintive monotone, yet musical, and of rare qualities. An invitation for the young people to the Grove succeeded, and with great delight Coraline and Frank looked forward to the visit.

An opportunity came soon after. They found the family charming, the house charming—everything charming, in fact. Within doors the brother and sister had rooms allotted to them, filled with everything that could afford relaxation and amusement to the wearied mind. Without were swings, a bowling-alley, and on the beautiful pond, now cleared from its weeds and slime, and kept in perfect order, a dainty boat sat gracefully.

"Anne," said Harrison, pausing on the edge of the pond, "let us take a sail. You needn't be afraid of your complexion, for we can row in the shadows, you see."

"Father likes to be with us on the water," said Anne, reluctantly.

"I don't think he would object, as our friends are here," said Harrison, with one foot on the edge of the boat. "Come, Frank, you and I will

go. I see by Miss Cora's face that she doesn't care, and I know Anne don't."

"I am subject to dizziness when sailing," said Coraline; and Anne and her friend moved toward the house. They had been some time engaged in a discussion concerning some feminine employment, when a servant entered, and with Mrs. Lattison's compliments, desired Cora to excuse Anne for a few minutes. The young girl changed color, but instantly left the chamber, while Coraline sat wondering, and very strangely impressed, she knew not why.

At length, moved more by restlessness than curiosity, she left her seat and walked from place to place, finding something new to admire at every point, until at last she came to a door, one-half of which was glass, through which shone a curtain of crimson stuff. Without reflection, and supposing that she was still moving in her friend's domains, she incautiously opened the door, and found herself standing on the threshold of a small chamber, similar to the one in which she had been sitting. It was, however, very different in its surroundings—in fact one of the most unusual places she had ever seen in her life, and astonishment kept her rooted to the spot. The floor was covered with carpeting so thick and soft that it felt like yielding feathers. The thought flashed through her mind, as she placed her foot forward, that there must be feathers beneath. There was one large window heavily arched, and through which the soft breeze blew—for, of glass there was not a particle, but instead, narrow bars of iron, crossed closely and riveted in the casement. Everywhere within reach, the walls appeared to be stuffed, and so yielding to the touch. A lounge that was immovable stood under the great window, and from it depended the material with which it had been covered in ragged strips. A feeling of horror came over the young girl, as she slowly took in all the surroundings. Her blood chilled to her heart, and she could scarcely summon strength enough to leave the room and close the door. Scarcely had she gained a seat, when Anne came in, flushed, yet smiling.

"Dear mamma is so very anxious when Harrison and I are not together," she said, very gently. "We two are all that are left of nine," she added, "and she somehow fancies that one of us will come to harm, if we are apart for ever so short a time."

The words fell strangely on the ears of Coraline. The mystery of that chamber was heavy on her heart. She seemed to feel a foreboding that it was in some way connected with her fate. And yet she could not speak of it.

She had taken an unwarrantable liberty in playing the spy, and she trembled guiltily when, some moments after, she saw Anna start as she passed the door, looked closely at the lock, then, taking a key from her pocket, fastened the door securely. Her face crimsoned, but she pretended to look across the river, and Anne did not appear to suspect. Presently the boys came out on the lawn. Frank and Harrison stood together. Coraline had been accustomed to consider her brother an unusually handsome lad, but, in the presence of Harrison Lattison, he looked almost ordinary. The face of Har-

ri son lighted up in a manner that no pen could describe. There was a glow—a succession of flashes of beauty—that made him seem superior to earth. His hair was long, of a rich purple-black, flowing in curls; his eyes were brown, tender as those of a true woman, enhanced in brightness by the softest tinting and deepening beneath the lid, that gave them a dreamy and sometimes a passionate character. Coraline turned to Anna; she knew the fond sister was thinking how beautiful he was, by the dimpling smile and eager gaze.

"Your brother is very handsome," Coraline said.

"I think so," she replied, still gazing. "But if you call *him* so beautiful, and he is—what would you have thought of Eric?"

"Eric was another brother, of course," Coraline responded.

"Yes, he was nineteen—only nineteen when he died," she replied, and Coraline saw that she shuddered from head to foot. "My brothers all met with a violent death," she added. "Eric was found in the river—a beautiful river in Germany. Oh! if you could have seen *him*—he was glorious!" There were tears in her eyes—her tones affected her young friend strangely.

"Met with violent death," repeated Coraline, shuddering; "I should think you would feel afraid for Harrison."

"We do," she replied; "but we have taken the greatest precautions—" suddenly she paused—her cheeks crimsoned—she stammered—"and at length said: "you see how fearful mamma is to have him go out alone. It is perhaps foolish, but we all feel so. When papa is at home, he devotes his time to him, superintends his studies and all that, you know, as mamma does with me—then we do not feel the least fear. But, when he is away, we are almost foolish in our anxiety."

CHAPTER II.

A QUEER COUPLE.

"Oh, be aisy, now, be aisy, Bumble; sure, an' you've done no harm to tell a bit of a story as ye did to the child. Didn't I kape the names back an' the place to meself intirely, so't no bad can't come of it at all? Bad luck to meself, though, if the Lattisons should hear of it, though, for the matter of that, the whole counthry round knew, an' if that excellent gentleman, Mr. Reynolds, had been here at the time, wouldn't he 'ave heard of it, sure? Bother! jist mind yer own business, Bumble, and howld yer tongue; ye're always gitting into mischief, ye are."

By this time, the Irishman came in sight of his rude home, a hovel built by the edge of the wood. It was a picturesque location. The river could be seen far off to the right. Behind the little tenement, made of rough-hewn logs, filled in with clay, a hill gradually ascended, filled with trees and tangled vines, with massive rocks cropping out here and there, and little black nooks, suggestive of mossy resting-places. A stout woman, twice the height of her husband, stood vigorously applying an ax to a good-sized log, and ever and anon addressing the stubborn victim in no measured terms of disapprobation.

"Eh! ye lazy raskill, ye won't split, will ye, ugh! there was a blow now, might a cracked yer hide. Ye think a woman's got hold of ye, do ye? Ugh! there ye go; ye've got a skull like my Tim; it's my belafe that I might crack him as many times over the head and he'd no feel it. Talk of a woman, ugh! when it's me as has to 'arn the bread to put into his mouth, and he dawdlin' on the bache, mindin' nets to ketch gudgeons. Whop! ye're beginnin' to listen to r'ason, are ye; it's not very sharp r'asonin', either, the edge of this ould ax, but I've asked Tim to grind it till me very breath in me body is gone, and like a spent fire, an' I've had to kindle it with a scoldin'. Sure, that's Tim, bad luck to him. An' this is the way ye 'ave me to split wood and do the drudgery; oh! boy, little did I think I'd be used this hard, when I married ye."

"Ah! an' if ye knew how near I'd come to bringing meself home widout the breath ov life in me, you wouldn't be after scoldin'. As it is, I shouldn't wonder if I'd the lockjaw in me finger this very night. I've run the boat-hook clear through it."

"Run the boat-hook through yer finger, ye blunderer? Don't ye suppose I know better nor that?"

"Well, then, couldn't ye tell that I meant the net-hook? Am I to find ye *ideas* as well as words? If I made a mistake it's because I'm half crazy wid the pain. Ah! Bridget, darlin', if ye'd seen me bleeding to death on the sand, ye'd had some pity in yer stony heart."

Bridget replied by a succession of unbelieving nods, and as she had managed the refractory log, by dividing and subdividing it, she took up an armful and walked into the house. Tim followed with a dogged air, and nursing his finger tenderly, though by the pucker in his lips, they had a decided inclination to whistle.

"Now mind the fire, will ye, unless ye'll have lockjaw in the eyes wid the pain of looking. I've got news for ye—sure, an' hasn't the gentleman from the Grove been here?"

"Ye don't say!" cried Tim, nearly upsetting the tea-kettle, which stood near, ready filled, as he sprang from his seat.

"There ye go!" shouted Bridget, saving it by a masterly bound. "Tim Bumble, ye're the most ongracious, onruly boy I ever *did* see. Ye can't move yer foot widout doing some mischief."

"Nor me finger either," spoke Tim, dolefully; "but come, aisy, Bridget, jist tell me what did the gentleman say to ye?"

"The first thing he did was to be plazed because ye'd a wife that knew something. 'Ah,' says he, 'so Tim is got a nice tidy wife of his own.' Says I, 'Yis, yer honor; and it's mighty little he does toward gitting her a livin', anyway. It's I that have to kape the pot b'illin', and put what's in it—an' split what's under it, too,' says I."

"Ah, now, Bridget, ye're too hard upon me intirely, an' I wid me finger kilt."

"Didn't I jist till the truth? An' thin he says, says he, 'Well, now, perhaps I'll give him something to do—t'll be aisy—so I'll jist call ag'in.'"

"An' sure, that's himself, though it's bowed down that he is, poor gentleman, an' no won-

dher. Bridget ye'll go out when he comes in. I'm sure he'll want no women in the way."

"I'll not do that same, thin. No, I'll not," cried the woman, as a gentleman outside reined up his horse and dismounted.

"Oh, well, now, honey, p'raps ye will," said Tim, good-naturedly, pleased at the prospect of having his own way for once, "if the gentleman says so."

And the gentleman did say so; almost his first request was that Mrs. Bridget might leave the room, and she, though rather sulkily, obeyed.

"And now, Tim, I suppose you are not overburdened with work," said Mr. Lattison.

He was a pale man, very thin, very quiet, and with a look of habitual suffering stamped upon his features.

"Not so much overburdened but what I could bear more," was Tim's cautious reply.

"You remember—you remember"—the man paused for a moment, struggling with some powerful emotion.

"Sure, an' you needn't say it, Mr. Lattison, for, indade, I remember it all, an' how I loved him to that extint I'd a lay down my life for him. Sure, an' I remember too much, Mr. Lattison. It's a dale the boy looked like him as came ridin' along the sands to-day with Miss Anne."

"Ah, that was Harrison," said the gentleman, with a sad smile.

"Of coorse he didn't recollect me, bein' a mere b'y when he left the Grove. But ef I may be so bold, Mr. Lattison—if ye'll p'ase excuse me—how is the—the sickness now, in the family?"

"Oh, Tim, you know how it used to be," half groaned the man. "Well, it's no better now, only there is some hope—some, I say. There's decided hope that if he lives till he is twenty-one, the disease may be eradicated. Oh, to keep him till then, Tim—only to keep him till then! Besides, you never could count upon the—the sickness, you know, at any set time; it would come when nobody expected—now it occurs periodically."

"An' may I ask, yer honor, when that manes?" queried Tim.

"Oh, at a certain time of the year. We all know what to expect now, and use every precaution. And, Tim, that's what I want to see you about. Times have been going hard, have they?"

"Oh, indade, sir, I'm not a-goin' to throuble you with the story of me trials, but if it wasn't for me wife, who knows how to turn an honest penny in a woman's way, faith it's not at all I'd be gittin' along, but the reverse of the matter, saying as I'd be takin' me two steps back to me one forward," and he shook his head with a melancholy survey of the fire, now causing the kettle to sing.

Mr. Lattison sat listening to this tirade with an abstracted air. At last he said, with a start:

"Well, well, never mind that now, Tim. The fact is, I'm not satisfied with the man I have to attend upon my poor boy at times. He makes himself too forward, too officious. Now with you I could always get along, and I

believe my poor boys loved you. What do you say to taking charge of *him* in the same way you did the other?"

"Sure, an' it's too happy I'd be, intirely. But there's me wife, Mr. Lattison, what 'd I do wid her? She's altogedther too capable for a woman."

Mr. Lattison could not forbear a smile at this evident depreciation of the notable Mrs. Bumble by her quiet husband.

"Couldn't she get along here—or, by the way, we shall be wanting an assistant in the dairy. I wonder what she could do in that line."

"Ivery thing, Mr. Lattison. Shure, it's out of a dairy I took her, as I've good occasion to know, for there's no day passes over me head that she don't twit me of the same."

"If I thought she could be trusted," mused Mr. Lattison.

"That she can be, sir. The woman would scorn to do a mane thing, indade she would."

"And for a handsome sum—"

"Ah, she be very foud o' money, sir," replied Tim, with a sigh.

"Well, Tim, I think you'll have to come up to the Grove. By the way, what obligations are you under to Mr. Reynolds, my good neighbor?"

"Nothin', nothin', sir. Sure, he only tolerates me," said Tim, with a whimsical look; "that is, I do odd jobs for him, and little arrands for the young ladies; he keeps a man, sir, or he might want me more."

"Then I shall not be discommoding him."

"Not at all, at all, sir," was the reply.

"Come up on Monday," said Mr. Lattison, "and we'll settle matters."

Mrs. Tim was summoned after his departure, and her wrath smothered in the beginning by the jubilant expression of her husband's countenance, his repeated hops, and the rapping of his knuckles.

"What are ye goin' out of yer senses for, ye spalpeen?" she queried.

"It's in me senses I'm going for I'm going into good luck. Arrah, it's no more ye'll be throwing it at me that I'm no man at all, and not able to support ye. I've a place at the Grove for life, and all my atcetterys" (he meant perquisites) "for nothin'. An' ye're to go into the dairy, an' I'm to go into the—och, it's no matter what, to be sure. I've me secrets, and of coorse ye wouldn't be afther perpetrating into them. Och, good luck to the Bumbles—good luck to the Bum ledyhums, as the little one says. I knew I'd come out straight at the end."

CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT PARTY.

TIME passed, and the Lattisons and Reynolds were on the most familiar terms. As the month of August approached, Coraline noticed that an unusual depression weighed down the spirit of her friend. At one of her visits the latter said, with a strange hesitancy:

"Will you excuse us from meeting with you at all during August? We keep ourselves quite secluded at that period, as we have peculiar duties, and mamma has some unusual notions

concerning our health. After that, perhaps by the middle of September, we are to give a grand party, and invite all the best families, but remember, we are going to be intimate only with yours."

The request seemed reasonable enough, and was acceded to; but Cora noticed that the sadness of her eyes had deepened, and that in her last visit to the Grove an inexpressible dejection seemed to pervade the whole household, down to the humblest of the domestics. Still, as this feeling seemed to gain in the family, Harrison grew more spirited, and, it seemed to her, more beautiful. How gleeful, almost fearfully so, became his laugh! His movements were more capricious, his wit keener. He flew rather than ran; there seemed no bounds to his happy, frolicsome mood. To Cora he was always gentle, and she felt conscious of a blind impulse to obey him in every thing. She did not seem to belong to herself when he was near, but was ever on the watch to see if he intended to make any demands of her, and felt a singular happiness in complying with his lightest wish.

"I wonder who those Lattisons are?" queried Mr. Reynolds one morning, when the family sat a breakfast. It was rather an unusual thing for him to wonder at any thing.

"Do you hear any reports about them?" asked his wife, who had been the confidante of her youngest daughter, and to whom the strange story of the murder had been told with childish variations.

"Only that they must be enormously rich, for they have been constantly traveling for years—and they certainly keep servants enough for the household of a petty sovereign. They have no less than three gardeners, and each one of them affords to keep men in his employ. Besides that, they have hired Tim Bumble and his wife, that untamable shrew, and Tim goes about dressed like a gentleman with his hands in his pockets. It's very singular, but wherever the young folks are seen, there is Tim—at some distance off, to be sure. I expect he's a sort of body-servant. Why in the world has such a stylish family come to live in such an out of the world place as this is? I can't understand it."

Mrs. Reynolds told him of Anne Lattison's singular request.

"Well, that is strange enough," was his reply—"an odd affair, on the whole. However, it's no business of ours, as I know of; they can afford to be singular, at any rate."

"Oh, Cora," cried Frank, (this was a week afterward) "I've been hearing the queerest sounds. I was down at the hedge fence at the boundary of father's land, and I saw the most beautiful bird I ever met with in my life. It was of the rarest colors, and seemed to be wounded, and it flew so low I thought perhaps I might catch it. It was over the fence—so I jumped it and ran on, for it appeared every moment as if I could just put my hand on it. Well, before I knew it I was plump on the back garden of the Lattisons, and on the point of turning away when I heard the most awful cries. Well, I lay low and listened, and the sounds went on, shriek after shriek, till it seemed as if I couldn't stand it. And there, a little way off,

on the other side of the house from where I was, who do you think I saw but Mrs. Lattison, crying as if her heart would break, and wringing her hands. I never felt so badly in all my life, and the way I turned and ran from there wasn't slow—but I seem to hear those fearful sounds now; who do you suppose it was?"

"Perhaps," said Coraline, "Mr. Lattison—you know we have scarcely seen him—is one of those cruel, tyrannical men we read of sometimes—and he might have been punishing one of his work-boys. Every thing seems strange over there."

"Nonsense," retorted Frank; "it isn't possible for Mr. Lattison to be a cruel, tyrannical man. Father and I met him, yesterday, and had quite a long conversation. He is slender and gentlemanly, and father declares has the most refined and poetical face he ever saw. But I'll tell you what," he added, in an aside to his eldest sister, "he's got the—there—I'd like to have called it 'hang-dog' look of the whole family. You know what I mean—as if they'd lost all their friends. How singular!"

For a long while, Coraline, whose heart was beginning to be strangely interested, pondered over the news Frank had brought—but the month and several weeks passed away, and then came the great party. The Reynoldses, especially Frank and Coraline, had longed for the time. It was Coraline's first participation in a festival of the kind, but neither the grand dresses prepared, the news of the great goings on, or the joy of the party weighed as much with Coraline as the delightful thought that she should meet with Harrison again.

The night came and they were driven to the Grove. Cora was ushered at once into Anne Lattison's own room. Anne was dressed in white satin, and looked as pure as an angel—Coraline, being dark, wore pink with white lace that became her wonderfully. The band arrived—the company gathered steadily, and by the hour of nine, the great parlors were filled. Up to this time, young Harrison had not made his appearance—Cora's quickly throbbing heart would not let her ask for him—but as the clock struck, he entered with his father.

"My poor brother has been quite ill," said Anne, who stood by Cora, and watched him nervously. Coraline, looking up at that moment, her eyes fell upon Mrs. Lattison. The pale mother stood almost motionless. Her lips were parted—her fingers moving, her eyes fastened upon Harrison, who had never appeared so pale, so spiritless, so entirely lifeless, but at the same time so supernaturally beautiful. His glance wandered indifferently.

"I say, Cora," said Francis, who was also waiting to be recognized, "it's all mighty queer, and seems to me more like a funeral than a party."

At that moment the boy's glance settled upon Coraline. There was a wavering, uncertain light in his face, then a faint flush, then a joyous look of recognition, and he sprung toward her almost childishly, welcoming her so noisily, so cheerily, that all eyes were turned toward her. From that moment he was no longer pale and tame, but the handsome, laughing boy, the witty, spirited companion. Heartily and with

a kindling of his olden self he entered into the sports of the evening, but toward Cora his manner was different from that with which he treated all the rest. Now, Anne and Mrs. Lattison's manner changed—they, too, threw off all appearance of care, and exerted themselves to make the time pass agreeably. As for Arty, she had made interest with some of the family, and gone off to see Mrs. Tim Bumble. She found the latter in the act of setting down a huge hamper.

"Oh! Miss Arty," cried the tall woman, shaking her cap-border, out of which the starch had vanished, "it's glad I am to see you. And what for did you l'ave the dancin' an' come here?"

"Why, I wanted to see you and Tim," said the child.

"As for Tim, he'll be hanging roun' the young master till they're sure of him, I suppose—thin he'll off, like the lazy boy he is, for a smoke, and his feet on the mantle."

"But, Bridget, what has Tim come here for—and why does he have to go with the young master, as you call him? I suppose you mean Harrison?"

"It's Harrison I mane, and it's him is been sick," said the woman, with a great air of mystery.

"But what's been the matter with him?" persisted the child.

"Why, you see, Arty," said Bridget, glancing slyly round, "it's his brain is the worst of him, and a great pity it is that he thinks so much of Miss Cora—that I say."

"Why—will he kill her?" queried Arty, with a frightened look, the sad fate of Tim's personages in the story floating through her brain.

"The saints forbid!" cried Bridget, crossing herself hastily; "but it's meself," she added, hurriedly, "that wouldn't want a child of me own to marry into this family."

There appeared to be little danger of such a consummation—the thought occurred even to Arty, and she laughed to herself.

"I'll tell Cora not to marry him if he asks her to," said Arty, precociously.

"La! Miss, pray don't say that I said a word," cried the cautious Mrs. Tim, and Arty promising so much, hurried back into the parlor. The first thing she saw was, seated in a recess and busily talking, Coraline and Harrison. Cora's face sparkled as if the interview were unwontedly agreeable, while Harrison's smile fascinated even the childish perception of Arty. But there was a dim foreboding of evil in her mind, and she lingered about her sister for the rest of the evening as if she feared harm were coming to her. But Cora was almost wildly happy. To be near him, to listen to his beautiful words, to gaze in that face so perfect with its star-like eyes, was life's completeness. It was the clear dawning of her first love.

CHAPTER IV.

FRAGMENTS FROM CORA'S JOURNAL.

"It was the tenth of August, and nearing twilight. My father and mother, my little sister and myself, sat in the cool west parlor. The day had been unusually sultry, and as my father went to the window he said:

"There's a terrible storm coming up, if I can read the signs aright. Such a silence through the woods is portentous."

"Gradually the air darkened: a dense cloud came from the horizon, spreading and deepening, while gusts of hot, damp wind, whirled dead leaves and crackling twigs into the entry, till we could no longer sit with the doors open. It was not many minutes before the blinds were closed, the curtains thrown down and the lamps lighted. The storm burst now in all its fury. We could hear the heavy throbs with which the heart of the forest responded—the wind howled, and the thunder, leaping from point to point, seemed to fall at last with a succession of heavy crashes, as if the very earth were split asunder.

"In the midst of the worst of the tempest came a heavy rap at the door. It was opened, and there stood Mr. Lattison's coachman, covered with mud, hatless and coatless, and holding the heavy whip with which he had knocked.

"Oh! sir," he cried, as my father confronted him, "has my young master Harrison wandered this way? Have you seen him anywhere about? He went out—and—and his father thought maybe if he wasn't lost—if he hadn't lost his way, that is—he'd be here."

"I sprung from my seat in the utmost affright. Arty sat near me—she moved, came to me, and whispered in my ear: 'I guess he has killed himself.' It went to my heart like a stroke of fierce lightning, and I cried out: 'Oh! John, what makes you think harm has come to him?'"

"The man looked confused, stammered, but answered:

"Oh, because—because, miss, we always looks after him, at this time."

"*This time!*" What did he mean? The hour, the twilight—or the month? *It was August!* My father assured him he had not met with Harrison, and questioned every member of the family. No one had seen him.

"The coachman had been gone twenty minutes, perhaps, when there came another rap. It was the head gardener, this time—he held a lantern in which was a powerful light.

"If you please," he said, appealing anxiously to my father, "Mr. Lattison would like you to give me the privilege of searching your grounds. We miss young Master Harrison—he has been gone two hours—we—they are all very anxious at the Grove, sir."

"He paused here—and my father replied: 'Go, go immediately—search everywhere—and take any of the servants to aid you; but it seems to me,' he added, turning to my mother, 'the boy is old enough to take care of himself. Searching in this way for a fellow of nineteen with lanterns—why, it's ridiculous.'"

"I was crying to myself, for there was a heavy weight at my heart; but I swallowed my tears as I said, 'Oh! father, they have lost six sons—six beautiful sons, Anne says, and they all died by drowning or by other violent deaths.'"

"I never heard of this," he said; "is there any—any—trouble in the family?" He would have said insanity, I knew by his hesitation and his glance at me. "That is dreadful—I don't wonder at their fright then. I'll go over there

and see if I can be of any service. Hark! I hear Tim in the hall."

"Arty was on her feet in a moment. 'Oh! Bumbledyhum,' she cried, flying out, I following her, 'have you found him?'"

"'Found him is it, Miss Arty?' said the man; niver a bit except the trace of him. An' how could it be my fault? Wasn't he as like a man in his sinses as could be, this wake past?'"

"I shuddered from head to foot.

"'Sure he was r'ading as quiet as a lamb,' he continued, turning to my father, 'and he'd been quiet all day, having nary one of his t'aring turns that takes the breath from me body to howld him. And he asks me to go git him a book from the libery as purty, now, for he always was the gintleman, even when he wasn't himself—an' he looked so innicent, thinks I to meself it's no harm, which as ye may say was disobeyin' orders intirely; but how'd I know, so desaved as I was—well (here he paused to take breath, to strike an attitude, and to run his fingers through his hair), as I live, I weren't gone a minnit by the watch, Shrewsbury time, an' no mistake, when I goes back with the book that it took me a long time to hunt up beca'se of its name, which I ain't used to like a scholar might be—and by me sowl the bit of a body was in the place at all, at all. He couldn't git out o' the windy in his room, 'cause that were barred wid iron—and he didn't git out by me, 'cause I'd felt the rush as he wint past. But he jist cl'ared the hall, and let himsilf down by the grapevine under his sister's windy—that must 'ave bin the way of it. Whin I found him missin' I just stood and tore me hair out by the handfuls, for how'd I meet his father or his mother, an' they to put such confidence in me? An' whin I told 'em—an' whin Bridget came to hear of it—och! the way me ears was battered to be sure, and now they're all going crazy, ivery mother's son of 'em, and—'"

"Another rap and another visitor—this time Mr. Lattison himself, his hair drenched and the rain streaming down his haggard cheeks, his beautiful dark eyes strained and shot with red, his thin lips quivering.

"'Have they found him?' he cried. 'Oh! Heaven!—my poor wife is almost beside herself—Anne is prostrated. I cannot lose him—the last of seven. Oh! sir, you behold an unhappy father—oh! wretched man that I am!'"

"'Where can he be—which way could he have taken?—let us begin the search anew,' cried my father, taking his hat and hurriedly leaving the room with Mr. Lattison.

"As for me, I was in agony almost too cruel to be borne. The thunder still rolled harshly along the far-off heaven, the lightning still penetrated, in vivid flashes, the cracks in the window-blinds, and the rain poured continuously. I gave loose to my imagination. I pictured my poor friend Anne, faint with terror and apprehension; I saw all the distress of the wretched mother—I went down in fancy to the desolate shore, now angry with the wildly-tossing elements, and traced the footsteps of the fugitive. I saw him running wildly in the face of the tempest, courting danger, and knowing no fear, I saw him rush into the whirling waters; and then his cold, beautiful form

lay on the stony bottom of the river, and the waves, lashed by the furious wind, threw his long hair from side to side or swayed his lifeless arms. These pictures grew too horrible. The storm was somewhat lessened in violence, and I gained a reluctant assent from my mother to go to Anna and comfort her. Under the guidance of Tim I gained the Grove, and a scene of desolation it was. Servants were hurrying to and fro with bright lanterns, under whose light the wet ground shone as if it were jeweled thickly—servants stood in groups on the porches, and the house alone looked dark. I found Mrs. Lattison walking the floor in disordered attire, her hair thrown down, her eyes cold, hard, unnatural. She turned to me as she cried, hoarsely, 'Once more I am childless,' and pointed to where Anne indeed lay like one bereft of life. I hurried to the poor girl's side, spoke her name and kissed her. She roused herself instantly, and throwing her arms about my neck, kissed me and sobbed her brother's name.

"'He will come back,' I said, soothingly.

"'Oh! if God will but grant it,' she cried, 'and we were so hopeful, for he is almost twenty, and if he lives until he is twenty-one—but oh! some terrible destiny remains for each of us.'

"'He may live,' I suggested.

"'He may—but the rest did not,' was her reply. 'So little as he has suffered this month—from his—malady,' she looked at me half fearfully.

"'I think I understand you,' I said, with another pang at my heart.

"'Well, all the physicians have given us hope. It is not hereditary—as far back as can be traced, no insanity'—oh! how I shudder at that word—'can be discovered in any of our ancestors; it is some trouble with the brain—tubercles, I think, that will gradually leave him from the age of nineteen to twenty-one. Then if his general health remains good, he is sure to have recovered. Oh! we have had such beautiful hopes of late—only to be dashed to the ground. If he has come to harm it will kill my mother—he was her idol.'

"'My father and Mr. Lattison have gone in search of him,' I said, still striving to calm her.

"'Oh! how kind!' she cried, clasping her hands, 'and several of the servants are out, too. If they are only in time—if only—he may—not—have destroyed himself.'

"Again that chill of horror in my veins—I could not bring myself to think of that beautiful temple dispossessed of reason—for oh! was he not growing very dear to my heart? How dear I dared not whisper to myself. Meantime Mrs. Lattison walked hurriedly back and forth—stopping occasionally at the window to listen, trembling with newly-awakened hopes or fears as her imagination tortured the sounds of the subsiding tempest into wild cries, or framed them to gentler sounds. I shall never forget the dramatic intensity of her look, and above all, her gesture. The dim light, save to her face a supernatural pallor and her eyes gleamed in two hollow rings of fire. Her lips were pressed together, a strange, wild anguish, that was sufficient in its concentrated torture to age one by years in as many moments, possessed her whole

face and frame, made more apparent by frantic gestures, and that low, smothered cry which, more than any outbursts, tells of wretchedness full and complete. The poor mother, yearning over her lost child.

"We sat, very quiet, Anne and I, save that her suppressed sobbings sometimes shook me. I alone was tearless and calm. I was thinking of the day, more than a year ago, when I looked into the room which I then thought so strangely contrived. Little did I imagine by whom it was occupied. In the midst of our trouble there was a humble knock, and in came Bridget as we started to our feet, bearing a tray on which smoked tea and coffee.

"Ye'll pardon me I know—if ye can bear the sight of me for the sake of that careless Tim Bumble who niglicted his duty as I never done such a thing in all me born days. Now won't the miss jist taste o' the tay? It'll stringthen ye to watch for the blissid young gentleman the like o' which 'arth hasn't got, an' heaven would be findin' it hard to bate. Sure ye'll take a trifle of the toast jist to keep swate life from l'avin'—come now. Ye'll not feel better, while it's 'ating, but after it's down ye will.

"Mrs. Lattison shook her head.

"Come, now—it's good news ye'll be afther hearin' any way, and ye'll need as much stringth for that as for the bad. 'Tis Mr. Harrison is not goin' for to l'ave us now, and such swate young ladies in trouble. Now ye'll jist try a little, and I'll give ye a good say. They use to call me a witch in ould Ireland because me good says come so thrue. Why there was Maggie MacAllister half dead over the coffin of her baby—I might say it were the coffin, though, to be sure, the childer lay in its cradle with the life in it jist as if it were flickin' on the edge of its lips and goin' out. She, the mother, were takin' on that wild that her screams might be heard by iverybody round her, and more too, for that matter. So says I, 'Whist, Maggie—I'll tell ye the boy'll live to look down on ye yit,' and so he did, glory to the saints in more ways than one; but we won't rake up any cast-bys. Come, drink the good tay, and I'll tell ye that the blessed Mr. Harrison'll live to be married—ye hear that?"

"I felt that Bridget's eyes were upon me, and along with my unspoken thanks for her kindly-meant encouragement came a blush of scarlet to face and neck. Mrs. Lattison seemed for a moment inclined to believe her, paused and sipped a little of the tea. Suddenly there came a lull in the tempest, and, as we listened for another outburst, we heard a different but more welcome sound, the hoarse cheer of men's voices. A wild cry broke from Anne and her mother. They hurried down-stairs half crazed with excitement, while I remained at the window above. Although the thunder had ceased, and the rain fell no longer, still there were occasional lightings up of the atmosphere, caused by the reflection of some far-off flash. In one of these I saw several persons leading some one in their midst, who leaned exhausted on the arms of two men, my father and Mr. Lattison. I sunk back, terrified and grateful. Another moment and Frank was at my side, for I summoned strength enough to descend the stairs.

"Where did they find him? I asked.

"Oh! such a chase," said Frank, still panting; 'he has been doing nothing but running and doubling for the last two hours. Why, he seemed sometimes to have as many lengths as a serpent. Isn't it odd, Cora? They captured him at last, when he had fallen from exhaustion. Here he comes, poor fellow!'

"Mrs. Lattison would have rushed forward, but Mr. Lattison made a sign that she should not move. They came quietly in; Harrison partly leaned, like one almost inanimate, upon his father's shoulder. How beautiful he was in that moment, the wet curls laying loosely on the pallid temples and the wide, white collar—only peace shining upon his face, and still my heart bled to see it. They would have conducted him up the stairs, but, suddenly seeming conscious that he had been brought without resistance to his home, he sprung from his captors and stood alone, while they barred the door. Never shall I forget the look that flashed over his face. Then he broke into a wild, long peal of laughter, and springing up, cried, hoarsely, 'I am king David! king David; where is Bathsheba?' I sunk in terror before his wavering look. His father began to expostulate, gently, but he would hear to nothing.

"Oh, Cora!" cried Anne, 'this is terrible, that you should see him thus. What will he say when the paroxysm is over?'

"Cora! where, where is Cora?" he cried. 'I will give Bathsheba for her—yea, all that a man hath will he give for—'

"At that moment he caught sight of me, and with a wild cry of delight sprung forward, crouching like a boy at my feet, catching at and fondling my hand—looking up in my face with such innocence of trust and childlikeness that I could not keep back my tears. It was very affecting. That night he followed me to his room-cell; at my wish lay down, and I sat there till he slept. My spirit grew very heavy as I reviewed the scenes of the past few hours."

CHAPTER V. HOME AGAIN.

"DARLING, we are back again at the Grove. I hasten to tell you that one fearful time of expected trial has been spared us. We passed last August in Paris, and there was no symptom of disease in Harrison. Do you not congratulate us?—for there is hope. They tell us so, all the old physicians, and that we need no longer dread for him. There is no danger now, except from some sudden and serious trouble, and even then, they say, that will not shock his brain, but may affect his spirits, causing a wild melancholy. You do not know how happy this makes us all—no more dread, no more trial. My mother is so changed in a year that you would hardly know her. She seems regaining her youth, so heavy a burden has been rolled from her life. Come and see us. I am at present ill, with a sprained ankle, and confined to my sofa, so that your presence will be doubly welcome."

Coraline received this welcome letter with rapture. It came when she was engaged in cooking, for she did not disdain, as the majority of delicately bred women of the present day do, to make herself mistress of all household duties,

Very pretty she looked, too, in her neat chintz dress, her hair securely hidden under a tasteful little covering, and her sleeves tucked around her elbow. The sun shone in with a broad smile, lighting up all the corners, giving grand illuminations by dancing over barnish and tin, and unfolding Cora in its luster as in a mantle. She went with the glad news to her mother, with whom Arty was sitting, smiling over her stent.

"We didn't expect them for two months, you know," said Cora, blushing and smiling.

"Oh, I'm so glad," Arty responded, with a quicker motion of the needle; "the Grove has looked so awful dull since they've been gone. If it hadn't been for Bridget Bumbledyhum, it would have seemed just like a tomb. Now, when shall we go?"

"Wo!" said Mrs. Reynolds, with a quiet smile.

"Why not?" responded Arty; "I'm as tall as Cora, and mean to be taller. Besides, I don't go there because I think I've got a beau," she added, with a correspondingly saucy toss of the head.

Cora turned crimson, but Arty broke into such a joyous, hearty laugh, that even her mother could not reprove her with becoming seriousness.

"That is good news about Mr. Harrison," said Mrs. Reynolds, after a pause, during which Coraline was rearranging her dress.

"Isn't it though? Now, I suppose, he can get a wife, but I hope he won't do as one of them did."

"What was that?" queried Mrs. Reynolds, indifferently.

"They were both found dead in bed the next morning," said Arty.

"Good heavens, child! where did you hear that?" cried Mrs. Reynolds.

"Why, I told you the story Bumbledyhum told me," said Arty.

"But, child, you never said that it had reference to the Lattisons."

"Nor did Bumbledyhum. But I'm very sure from the way he told it that it was one of the Lattisons. But, bless us, Mr. Harrison may have brought home a wife, a French woman. If so, sha'n't I get the fashions?"

Coraline laughed, though there came a sudden heaviness to her heart. What if he had brought home a wife, or what if he had become engaged since he had been away? She did not wish to believe it, but still it was not improbable, and her heart beat so very fast that its motion became almost painful.

"Now what shall I do with regard to this invitation, mother?" asked Cora.

"Wait till Frank comes and he'll go with you," said Arty.

That would not be till evening, but still there was no better way.

Coraline hurried about, all excitement, and had just shaken her curling hair into its place when Arty gave a half-smothered cry and a laugh. She looked up in surprise. Arty was clapping her hands quietly, pretending to be nodding to some one.

"Cora, true as you live, it's young Lattison in a stylish carriage. There, I knew he would; he's stopping here. Run right down, Cora."

But Cora was petrified with sudden surprise. After an absence of a year, how should she meet him?

"Oh, Cora, he's so handsome!" cried the impulsive Arty. "I declare I never saw any thing of flesh and blood look so splendid."

"Arty, Arty, don't talk so foolishly," said Mrs. Reynolds.

"Why, mother, I'm fourteen," responded Arty, with a mischievous laugh; "but come, Cora—mother, mayn't I go in her place? she just stands there and does nothing. What a silly goose, Cora Reynolds!"

Of course after this the young lady turned to her toilet, especially as the maid came up with Mr. Lattison's exquisitely engraved card.

"Must have been done in Paris," suggested Arty, piquantly. "What beautiful printing! Come, Cora, you really look a thousand times handsomer than you did when he went away."

"Hush, Arty," exclaimed the young girl, in a vexed voice. "I am not fit to be seen."

"Yes, you are; you're one that looks better for blushing," continued the girl, merrily; and Cora heard the pleasant laugh and the words, "Give him my compliments," ringing after her as she went down stairs.

To pause upon the threshold—to draw one long breath—to feel with a tantalizing inquietude that she was far from looking her best—all this, of course, Cora was privileged to do. Nor was the sad remembrance of what she had seen and suffered within the precincts of the young man's home wanting to aggravate her uneasiness.

All was forgotten, however, when, opening the door, a step was heard—a face came forward. How he was improved; oh, so beautiful, so noble he was! His style was inimitable; he had gained the repose of manner before wanting. He had gained a height and a certain regality that never sat more gracefully upon any human being. His face had taken on the deeper tints and stronger outlines of manhood. In other things he was not changed. There was the olden deference—the worshipful look that in him meant so much, or, if not meant, was interpreted by one gentle heart.

"My dear Miss Cora," he said, a warm enthusiasm in his voice, "how much I rejoice to see you again!"

"I am very happy that you have returned," said Cora, modestly.

"Yes; after all, home is the sweetest spot on earth. I was born at the Grove, and it is the place of my heart. I felt this even in that gayest of cities, and was not sorry to leave all its associations for the quiet and beauty of this little nook."

"How is Anne? I received a note from her; she has met with a misfortune."

"Yes; sprained her poor little ankle in very foolishly running after me for a farewell kiss yesterday, as I left her to reach the Grove first. In fact, I have come delegated with a most important mission—to capture your quiet self, and take you over to the Grove; Anne and mother are so anxious to see you. Can you go? Say yes."

How could she say otherwise, looking in his

beaming face that always took heart and judgment captive?

In a few moments she was ready, and seated by his side. It was a most delightful drive. To vary the route, Harrison went over the shore; the white sand glistened, and the thud of the horse's hoofs on the yielding surface was a pleasant sound.

"I remember you standing there as you did the first time you were visible to my sight," he said, pointing to the place in which she had stood on the occasion of Tim's wounded finger, three years ago. "How I wished you would look round, as I saw the ribbons flutter, and the folds of your dress tremble in the sea breeze. But you would not, and I liked you all the better for it. Little I thought you would ever be sitting by my side."

Then turning the horse's head he drove to an eminence a mile beyond his father's house. The view was lovely in the extreme. Silvery rivulets wound among the valley lands—streams ran down the sloping hillsides—herds and flocks fed on the grassy slopes, while many a cosy little cottage nestled upon the broad intervals, shut from the bleaker winds by the hills, covered from base to summit with living verdure.

"What will Anne think has become of us?" at last he ejaculated, with an admiring glance on his fair young friend. "I believe we must hurry a little. Now, Mr. Victor," he cried, addressing the horse, "we must scamper home."

Mrs. Lattison met them at the door, having seen them from the window of her room. The greeting between her and Coraline was like that between a mother and daughter. Anne was so overjoyed to see her that she laughed and cried together.

"To think I shall have to lie here a week longer, perhaps two!" exclaimed Anne, vexedly. "I shall lose so many splendid rides and drives. I am so glad we are at home, though, for Harrison will not be lonesome now. And do you know he was, everywhere we went, in Paris, if I could not follow him, the baby? Not one of the beautiful women he met seemed to make the slightest impression on his mind. I think he left his heart behind him at the Grove, for he could talk of nothing else. But imagine if you can what our happiness is—the year of danger is past. We are no longer troubled with any fear for his reason. He has so improved in health, and I think in appearance."

"I think him very greatly improved," said Coraline, who had drawn a red velvet hassock by the side of her friend. "Come, tell me something of your travels."

"Oh, I've so much to tell, that I don't know where to begin. We visited all the famous places in London, to be sure, and some time I'll show you the drawings I made. We went through Germany, gave Holland a little call, stopped in Ireland two months, and in France six. It is a delightful country, that France, only one gets so weary! and then I learned that I knew nothing of French, and had to begin again with a magnificent whiskerando, who was almost captivating, and who had an admirable method; so you don't know how differently I pronounce. Why, even Tim acquired

some of the language, and it would amuse you to hear him talk with Bridget, who despises all such accomplishments."

At this moment Harrison came into the room, the flush of health mantling his cheeks, his eyes sparkling with pleasure as they rested on the group. He did not interrupt them however, but moving toward the piano, sent over the stillness of the atmosphere waves of melodious sound that made the hush more intense than before. He arose, and, standing, touched the keys here and there, while a smile that had been lighting his features changed suddenly to a laugh.

"It's really the finest fun in the world to hear that fellow Tim talk French," he exclaimed, laughing again.

"Why, where is he now?" asked Anne.

"In the keeping-room. The lazy rascal is lolling on the bench smoking a villainous pipe, and astonishing his wife. It is almost enough to make one die with laughter. Just come for a moment, Miss Cora—it won't trouble your conscience much, for they're neither of them over sensitive." Urged by Anne, Coraline followed and stood with Harrison in a small recess near the open door, where they could hear every word. Bridget was ironing away at a long table, and her short dress, red cheeks and vigorous movements proclaimed her as capable as Tim was lazy.

"Oh! be done wid the ridic'ulous nonsense," she cried, slamming the iron down with a vehemence almost marvelous. "I won't belave a word of it."

"Polly vow mouchong Frauchong," said Tim, composedly pulling away as he lifted the blackened pipe from his mouth.

"An' I should like to know what sich nonsense as that manes, now?" cried Bridget, pulling savagely at a ruffle.

"It manes that when we're in France we do as the people of Rome do, to be sure," replied Tim.

"D'ye spake of Rome where his holiness lives?—oh! Tim, that ye'd be takin' sich liberties wid yer tongue," said his wife, gravely.

"Well, now—ye wouldn't think what potatoes meant would ye?"

"No, what do they?" queried Bridget, excited.

"Ah! but I musn't be takin' liberties wid me tongue," Tim responded, highly sarcastic.

"Ye spalpeen! but potatoes and Rome is a different thing," said Bridget. "Ye might tell me the French for potatoes—yet I've me doubts if ye don't make up yer French as ye go."

Tim gave a shrewd chuckle.

"A purty thing to tell a man what's been residing in the country six months an' over. Didn't I have to ax after things ivery day of me life, and didn't I cry out, 'Here waitor, potterong taterong oue Franchee?' I reckon," and Tim smoked on, coolly, while Harrison and Cora laughed outside.

"Why, mesilf could understand that much," said Bridget, complacently.

"Yis, afther you've been tould," responded Tim; "but now what'd you say if I called ye a mare—eh?"

"I'd say ye'd been drinkin' not to know a wo-

man from a baste," said Bridget, with a good deal of vim.

"Sure ye would, an' I'd not blame ye; but the French people call all the women-folks maîtres—and the men, monseers."

"I'll not believe ye!" cried Bridget, derisively.

"But it's for a fact, and ye may ask Miss Anne. Then they call books livers, and bread, pain—oh! it's a very quare language, intirely—jist the opposite to ours, ye may believe."

"I should think the people'd be quare," responded his wife.

"Ye may well say," replied Tim, knocking the ashes out of his pipe. "Why some of them, specially if they was purty girls, would go out walking wid a little white cap on the head, and nothin' on at all, at all, savin' jist—"

"Tim, ye may go back to France ag'in before I'll b'lave ye—it's tarrible wicked ye are at tellin' stories like that."

"It's the raal truth I'm sp'akin', ye may be sure of that—I tell you they're grissels, and I never saw a shawl on one of 'em—they'd walk in the strates jist as you would, if ye'd go out now, savin' the flat."

"Well, I'd say they was that onproper I'd niver have to spake wid them," replied Bridget.

"But it's the custom there, honey, and if the grissels wore bonnets, there'd be a revolution—'cause they're on the pint of a revolution every day, and the men all go to sleep wid their arms in their hands—oh! ye may belave that."

Harrison beckoned Cora away. Instead of going up to Anne's room, he led her into the conservatory. The sweet sights and scents made the place replete with a luxury all its own. Scarlet roses, snowy lilies and vari-colored petunias hung from their delicate stems, while the fragrance of all Arabia's spices seemed gathered there. They walked along the brilliant length.

"Here is a plant we brought from Paris," said Harrison, moving some huge leaves to show a cluster of purple red berries, shining as if sprinkled with fine dew.

"And what do you call it?" she asked.

"The French name is insignificant," was his reply. "I have given it another—I call it Coraline."

The look that accompanied this little speech, more than the matter itself, brought a deep flush to the cheek of the young girl.

"You thought of your friends then, when you were away."

"I thought of you, Miss Cora," he answered, in a low voice, and her heart beat heavily as she listened. "I thought if ever,"—his voice trembled—"if ever I might call you mine, there would be no happier man on earth than I."

This was abrupt, and found Cora speechless. A thousand emotions rushed over her mind—the predominant one love, pure and holy almost as an angel's might be—and yet all were shadowed by the darkest forebodings, notwithstanding the security his family seemed to feel. That beautiful eyel she had once seen it lighted with the fires of madness; that cheek had been white with the pallor of insanity—those hands had clutched wildly at the air, and more than once thinned the locks on his own head. There was but one gleam of hope—it was not

believed to be hereditary. But might it not be, and the family unaware of the fact? Supposing it had not appeared for three, four or five generations, and the records had been blotted out. One look at him, and all dread, all foreboding vanished; but as soon as she turned away, there came a dark cloud and settled on her soul. Meantime his glance was resting upon her—so full of the tenderest love.

"You will excuse me," she said, confusedly, "if I do not answer you now. I must have time—to—consult my—"

"As long as you please," he said, softly, yet passionately, "only tell me I am not indifferent to you. For years I have loved you."

She looked up—her gaze was half mournful as she said, in whispering tones, "And so I have you."

Thus love was plighted while the air palpitated with the breath of the rose-leaf and the odor of the mignonette—under the sweep of the graceful vine, heavy with purple sweets—within hearing of the southern birds, who, perched in cage-like sunbeams, trilled their little songs of love.

"Where is Cora, dear?" asked Mrs. Lattison, entering the room where Anne was alone.

"Harrison carried her away, to hear Tim Bumble talk French-Irish," replied Anne, laughing. "I suppose she has no idea how time is flitting. They have been gone nearly an hour."

"Cora is a very sweet girl," said Mrs. Lattison, musing.

"And did you know, mother, that Harrison loves her? I am sure of it," she said in reply to her mother's glance.

"But what of her?" queried the mother, hastily.

"I believe the love is returned," rejoined Anne.

"Thank God!" and the mother bowed her forehead upon her hands—"my only dread is removed. But, Anne, suppose her parents have scruples? They are not very rich, I don't care for that—they are not very famous—their name is not an old one; so far we have all the advantage on our side; but they may make objections on account of—of Harrison's malady."

"But that, mother, we have no longer any fear of; think what competent judges have pronounced upon his state. I believe we need have no scruples—I am sure I have none. If they marry, they will be very happy together, and neither of them regret it. But what letter is that, mother?" Mrs. Lattison was drawing a letter from her pocket.

"You remember the lady at whose house we visited in London who had so much trouble about the disposal of property left her by her husband?"

"Oh! that pale, pretty lady, Catharine, as many called her," replied Anne; "yes, indeed—I remember her very well. Her relations, or rather her husband's relations, were trying to contest the will. Oh, yes, her face would be one of the last to forget, so small, so perfectly beautiful. Well, what does she say, mother?"

"That she has married again," was the reply, "a strong, noble man, a barrister, who will help her keep her rights. I hope so, for she has suf-

fered much, and if those cruel people can contrive to keep her from the property, they will. But here comes Harrison and Cora; find out if Cora truly loves him." What would not that mother have sacrificed for the sake of her idol?

CHAPTER VI.

BRIDGET'S MISGIVINGS.

"It's attached to me he is—very much attached to me is Misther Harrison, an' therefore, Bridget, you an' I is to go wid the new family and be in first rate positions. Arrah! see what ye got now by marrying me, Tim Bumble."

"Ye'd better be done throwing that same up in my face, ivery time you spake of things. Mightn't I a had old Croole the widdy'er wid a fortune of twinty poun' to begin wid—and mightn't I 'ave bettered meself wid young O'Shane who tinded to the illigant brass works o' the factory—an' wasn't me faether Colonel of milishy, and ain't I Bridget Rourke, that was the capablist woman for making butter an' cheese in the country where I come from? See what I got, indade—but for the blissings of Providence, I'd been splitting me own wood and putting me own 'arnings into the pot—that would I."

"Ah! but ould Croole war a miser," cried Tim, with an exultant laugh. "Besides that, hadn't he an illigant expression on the side of his face where there wasn't no eye at all—and a correspondin' one whin he opened his mouth, where there wasn't no teeth at all! To be sure he wasn't but seventy, and so bulged out wid the rheumatiz that his knees was behind him. Then there's O'Shane, och! but ye're mighty funny now—isn't it all for drink he spins his money? Doesn't he come home and abuse the woman that would be his wife, if he had any, ivery night of his life? O'Shane to be sure! But come, Bridget, darlin', we won't be after quarreling because neither of us wouldn't give up the ship nohow. But what are ye making there so tasty I'd like to know?"

"It's a dress for the weddin', to be sure, that Miss Anne give me wid all the trimmin's. And it's vexed I am that I kape gittin' things wrong side out—for it's a boding of ill-luck, so I'm afeard. There's Tip Connell's weddin' that I tinded, ye know, in the capacity of bridesmaid, and while I was making the skirt of me dress, sure I had to rip it up four times intirely, an' sure enough, she's lost four childers this very year."

"And what is't, ye mane by calling Tip, she?" asked Tim.

"Because she is a Tip. Her father was a drunken fellow and he called her Tiperary—so it was Tip she goad by, poor thing. I'd give me dog a better name. But do you know jist whin this weddin' comes off?"

"By the twentieth of the month," replied Tim, preparing his pipe for a smoke.

"Oh, dear, and it's the sixteenth to-day. Well, it's mighty sorry I'd be to marry my daughter—"

"Whist!" exclaimed Tim, suddenly; "don't ye know that walls have ears and Misther Harrison is all over the house?"

As if to verify his words, in came Harrison at that moment, holding up an article of apparel.

"My darling woman!" he cried, his fine eyes beaming with joyous light, "do help me out of my difficulty. Here's my favorite collar, buttonless—and mother and Annie are so busy that absolutely there's no getting near them for a social word. Come—will you help me, and now?"

"Sure will I," said Bridget with alacrity, while Tim held his pipe out the window, "and it's much joy I'd wish ye for the prospect of so good and pretty a wife, Mr. Harrison. The sight of her is a blessing," she added.

"Aye—aqual to father Hennessy's, any day," rejoined Tim.

"I wasn't comparing with the praist," said Bridget, in a cold tone; "the blessing of the eyes is one thing—the blessing of the howly father another."

"They're both different," mumbled Tim.

"You may well give me joy," said Harrison, lifting his head proudly. "A fairer or a sweeter bride never came to any man's home than she will be."

"So say you true," spoke Bridget, handing him the mended article.

"How handy you are with your needle! In fact, with everything," said Harrison, pressing into her fingers a silver coin. "There, that will buy you a ribbon if nothing more."

"Isn't he handsome, though?" ejaculated Bridget, looking after him—"but as I was saying," she added, with a glance of oracular wisdom, "shouldn't you be afraid?"

"Afraid of what?"

"Of them turns," she whispered.

"They're all gone," was the reply.

"But it's in my head and on me heart the story ye told me about the odther poor boy. The rage came on him suddenly, and he—"

"Whist! I tell ye," cried Tim, really fearful; "that's a thing that if mentioned and got to the ears of Mr. Lattison would ruin me intirely. Besides, it wasn't wid him as wid Mr. Harrison, for he weren't of age, which Mr. Harrison is, and the danger gone, accordin' to the medical men in Paris, Vou Le Fronchee."

"Sure, an' I hope so," said Bridget, turning to her work. "There! d'ye iver see the like! if I haven't sewed this whole seam wrong side out! Tim, ye may depend upon it, there's a trouble brewin' somewhere."

"It's all your nonsense, Bridget."

"Didn't I note it at the time Tooney Mike's daughter died, jist on to tin wid the mazles? I was the one to sew on her dress, and I kept makin' wrong stitches and gittin' corners turned end for end, and true as ye live, Tim Bumble, there was an accident happened at the grave."

"An' what was that?" queried Tim, with wide-open eyes. "Sure, what could happen to the dead?"

"Well, it war the strangest sight these eyes iver saw—an' if ye'd been to Ireland then, ye'd heard the story from town to town, for the tidings flew like the fire in a high wind. Why—now be aisy, Tim—look alive, man, ye're spillin' all the ashes out of your pipe on the clane floor. Well, they'd jist come to the grave afther they'd had their proper wake, and the mother was crying fit to kill herself, and the coffin

was sot down—an' the praist, he—well if iver, Tim Bumble ye're trimbling like a lafe."

"Now, Bridget, be aisy and go on, woman—be aisy and go on."

"Well, we stood there thinking of the cowl'd corpse an' the poor mother's sorrow, when somebody kneeled down to take a look—an' he sprung up to his feet with a loud schriek, an' says he, 'By the howly Virgin, she's a-livin'!'"

"Now, Bridget," gasped Tim, whose eyes stood out like two small globes, "now, Bridget, it's a sin and a shame to be tellin' sich unprobable stories."

"But didn't I see wid me own eyes, and isn't seein' bel'avin'?" queried Bridget, indignantly.

"Very well—then I'll howld me tongue; it's no use for me to be talkin'."

"I ax your pardon," said Tim, humbly, "I'll not interrupt ye agen."

"But it makes me shiver in me bones to think of it," continued Bridget, "how, as I stood there, there come a whisper, sort o' hollow-like, 'she's alive,' and the people, 'specially the younger ones, begin to scamper from the place. It were a time of confusion, intirely, an' a thing I couldn't see through, for I'd sot up wid her, an' saw the child breathe her last—an' made her shrowd and seen the breath kindly out, and had the mates an' sperrits at the wake, an' I couldn't bel'ave anythin' about it. But as thrue as ye live, Tim—"

"Howly saints, what?" cried Tim, with staring eyeballs.

"The girl was alive, an' she's alive this day," said Bridget, with emphasis.

"And d'ye call *that* an accident?" queried Tim, shaking as he spoke, and laughing a little; "if it were, it were a mighty fine one, and it'd not trouble me if it happened the same to me-silf, when I have ye a widder, Bridget."

"Sure, it's a burial I like to see whin I go to a burvin'," said Bridget, coolly, "and a weddin', whin I go to a weddin'; either one is proper in its place. Well, well; by the way, me cotton kinks; there's goin' to be hard words somewhere. But what is Mr. Harrison going off for?"

"Why, afther he's made his tower, I hear," said Tim, quietly, for the story his wife had been telling had subdued him, "his father's goin' to make him into a merchant. It's the life of variety they say he wants, and that'll give it. Then, sure, won't we go to the city wid them, an' won't you an' me shine, Bridget—och!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE GRANDFATHER'S STORY.

CORA and her sister sat together in one of the cosiest little *boudoirs* that was ever seen. The Reynolds, if not wealthy, still had enough to live in ease and refinement, and the elegancies of the rich man were, many of them, scattered about their dwelling. The room in which his daughters were ensconced, like pretty pictures in a costly frame, was lined with tasteful hanging of blue silk and lace. It had been a dream of Cora's, when she was a little child, that she had such an apartment, and her father, to gratify her wish, caused it to be arranged so as to surprise her on her return from a visit. Hence-

forth, the sisters occupied it together, and many happy hours had they passed there. Now, upon the soft, white counterpane of the bed, a costly dress of rich lace lay gleaming in white light and gray shadow. How beautiful it was! Arty never ceased to admire it. Neither child nor woman, her manner and her conversation presented the peculiarities of both.

"The most splendid thing!" she exclaimed, looking up from her work every other moment; "how I should like to see myself in it over pink brocade—low neck and short sleeves. Shouldn't I look pretty, say, Cora? But you will wear it over dead white—spoil the effect. Oh, Cora, how *shall* you feel when you come to stand up? That must be the most trying part—before all the people—I never could in this world."

"You'll not be very likely to in the next," said somebody, entering at that moment.

It was Frank.

"You needn't scold, now, because I came in without knocking; I never thought. Flushed, am I? I've been running a race with Harrison—he's the greatest fellow on horseback! Why, he goes like the wind; he seems fairly wild, and the faster he flies the wilder is he. I wonder we didn't both break our necks or our horses; but I was determined not to be beat. I put my determination into practice, and, consequently, wasn't beat. But, oh! that's the wedding fix-ing, is it? I forgot; I must buy some white gloves to say good-by in."

He stooped and kissed Cora on the cheek. Only a year older than his favorite sister, he felt keenly the pang of parting, and, though no one suspected it, there were tears in his eyes when he lifted himself up.

"I wish I were going off with you," he said, carelessly; "but, as arrangements are made for my future interests with a certain merchant in B—, why, I suppose I must stay at home. One comfort is that you will be in the city, and I can come and see you as often as I like. That will seem quite like home."

"You shall come and stay with us altogether," said Coraline, warmly, her cheek taking on a deeper hue as she used that conjunctive syllable,

"No, no, if you please, little woman. A home of my own or the home of a stranger. How do you suppose I should feel if I overheard Harrison and you quarreling? To be sure, I should take your part, and get myself into trouble."

"Oh! but we sha'n't quarrel," said Coraline, so earnestly, that her brother laughed outright.

"I'd like to know who could quarrel with Coraline," said Arty, quietly. "Oh, Cora! we're to have lots of those superb roses from the Grove; Harrison has ordered the gardener to cut them all down for bouquets. Won't they be splendid? I'm going to have japonicas in my hair."

"I dare say you'll be trimmed up in great style, both of you," responded Frank; and he began humming the "Wedding March."

Meantime, Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds sat together, holding a conference.

"Mr. Lattison insists upon presenting the house to Coraline," he said, coming out of a brown study.

"He is very generous and very kind. I sup-

pose he thinks—"she hesitated; their eyes met.

"Thinks what?" queried Mr. Reynolds, nervously.

"If anything should happen," she began, timidly, "she would have something for herself."

"If anything should happen," murmured Mr. Reynolds, in an undertone. "Sometimes, wife, I feel miserably about this match. We are not sure of his entire recovery; and what were all the wealth and position compared to a fate like that?"

"She seemed to feel so for some time," said his wife, thoughtfully; "but the poor child has loved him for years, and the pleadings of Anne and Mr. Lattison effected the matter at last. I think we have been wise in saying as little as possible, and, after laying the possible consequences before her, leaving her to her own judgment. It is strange that Harrison prefers, with his want of experience, to go into active business."

"His partner understands enough for both. He is a fine, capable fellow, so my brother says, who is much interested in him, and thinks there never was another like him. I don't know that I quite agree with you about business affairs. I think it will give Harrison constant and active employment, which he needs. Let us hope for the best, wife. It is very certain that there is no hereditary taint in his blood, and a more beautiful, bright, determined creature I never saw. I love him already like a son."

At that moment a carriage drove up to the house. Two venerable faces looked forth on the little throng that was instantly gathered in the veranda to greet them. Still hale, hearty and handsome, grandfather Reynolds needed no assistance from the vehicle.

"Well, children," he said, as they gave him a loving welcome, "I have come to the wedding."

"And I, too," cried grandmother Reynolds, who was leaning on the arm of her son. "I'm so young and smart," she continued, smiling, "I don't know but you will want me for one of the bridesmaids."

By evening a pleasant company sat in the cheerful parlor. Anne Lattison and her brother were there; the old people, refreshed and smiling, sat in arm-chairs, looking around them with thankful hearts. Arty, and a young lady acquaintance of her own age, were seated at a table, and from the chandelier above fell a flood of mellow light on the beautifully colored plates of a book full of Indian faces, groups and costumes.

"Oh! I do so dote on Indians," exclaimed Arty, after exhausting her enthusiasm on a peculiarly handsome and richly-dressed chief.

"So what?" exclaimed her grandfather, shaking back his silvery locks as he lifted his head, and his piercing glance went over to her.

"Why, dote on Indians, dear grandpa; they do look so noble here in their splendid furs, their richly-colored robes and their feathers."

"Noble! the bloodthirsty wretches!" said the old man, holding forth one hand as he spoke, and smiting it with the other; "that, and this, and every part of my body, in fact, is scarred by those infernal dogs. Why, look here, child," and he drew the white locks from his ample

forehead, "see the marks of their scalping-knife. They left me for dead, once, and came near having these locks hanging at their accursed girdles."

"Your grandfather always speaks plainly on that theme," said Mrs. Reynolds.

"Why, grandfather!" exclaimed Arty, drawing toward the old gentleman, "is it possible that you ever had any trouble with real Indians? Was that white mark made by the savages?"

"Yes. Talk about their bravery—the stubborn, inborn fiends, they don't know what true bravery means. The courage of a beast is all they have. If you had seen as much of the Indians as I have, you'd never take those creatures of the painter's imagination to be the Simon Pure savage. No, no; there's a difference. Come, children, draw near, and I'll tell you a story that will cure you of doting upon Indians."

"When I was a young man, I went West, and had many a bout with the border savages. There was never any poetry in your old grandfather, Arty. I never could see anything beautiful in their hideously-painted faces, and, to tell the truth, they killed my only brother, and I hated the whole race."

"Well, we had a long spell of peace, and had become tired of our quiet life in our cabins upon Boone's station. It was too easy a life for young fellows—simply gunning, fishing, sleeping and eating. We weren't like the mustached gentry of the present day—begging your pardon, young men. We couldn't dress up in those times, and take little bits of paper in our hands, and go call upon the pretty ladies, to show off our teeth and broadcloth the best part of the day. We were rough men in our hunting-frocks, who thought a good-sized deer none too heavy to throw over our shoulders after we had run him down, and to whom other dears were as fabulous as myths."

"But, as I tell you, we—there were four of us—had become tired of idleness, and wanted another bout with the Indians. So knowing that a party had stolen some horses, and that they had taken their way to Chillicothe, we set out after them to regain the booty they had taken. We reached Chillicothe a few days afterward, and fell in with a drove of horses feeding in the rich prairie-grass. Of these we secured six, and started on our return. Before we reached the river a storm came up. The heavens grew black with clouds, and the wind blew like a hurricane. What to do with the horses we could hardly decide, for they had become unmanageable. The river was so swollen—its waves lashed with fury—that we dared not venture to cross, and we were fearful of being pursued. It was nearly evening, and we could just find our way back to the hill, where, after hobbling our animals, we remained during the night. It was an awful scene. The rain poured in torrents; the lightning blazed from point to point; and the thunder seemed to crash and break against the hills. We were all exposed to the fury of the tempest. In the morning our clothes were drenched, and we only saved our powder dry by the greatest precaution. The wind, however, had subsided, and we tried again to get our horses over to the

other side. It was in vain; the creatures resisted every attempt, and we were driven to the alternative of losing our lives or losing our horses. Of course we chose the latter, and selecting each of us one of the best, we made for the falls.

"There was a handsome young fellow with us, a Kentuckian by birth, who thought we had scarcely had adventure enough yet, so he proposed to me to let the rest go on while he and I captured two splendid bays. We turned back, accordingly, and came the first thing on a trail of smoking savages, who had been undoubtedly seeking us from the first. My dear child, if you had seen them as they really were, their faces streaked black and yellow, their untanned blankets, rough leggings and demoniac faces, you never would have doted on them. Willis, the Kentuckian, was some ways ahead of me, and, by unsuccessful maneuvering, fell immediately into their hands. It was a direful sight to see them each drive with his heavy club at the head of the poor fellow. He was down in less than a minute, and they scalped him, throwing the fresh, bleeding skin over their weapons, and waving it in my sight.

"I was mounted on a splendid horse. They, too, were mounted and had fleet animals, so they pursued me at the top of their speed. For a time I escaped—only to fall into their barbarous hands, however. Deceived by a voice I thought familiar, and the pronunciation of a word in English, I followed a trail, and still lured on by the supposition that I was on the track of the friends from whom I had separated, and who might have come back to the rescue, I went cautiously forward, but suddenly found myself among a party of Indians who were so engaged, that, I suppose, if I had possessed presence of mind, I might have escaped, for I think they did not see me. However, deeming the boldest course would be the best, I plunged away into the forest, but they were too quick for me, and were after me like a pack of hounds. Springing from my horse, I took advantage of some fallen timber, and tried to dodge them—to hide among the underbrush, but their cunning defeated my purposes. They divided into two parties and rode along on either side of the timber, beating it with their horrible weapons and driving me out at the opposite end, where stood an enormous savage with a lifted tomahawk. As he was about to strike me to the earth, however, another Indian, equally powerful, lifted me as if I had been a feather out of the way of the descending instrument of death. I was a prisoner, and obliged to make the best of it."

"Oh, grandfather!" cried Arty, "how did you feel?"

"How did I feel? How would you feel with ten jabbering savages about you, each one looking as if he could eat you without pepper or salt?"

"Oh! dear," cried Arty, shuddering, "I don't know what I should have done. It must have been a trying moment."

"Not half as trying as what followed," replied the old man, shaking his white locks.

"They muttered their outlandish gibberish in my face, making up hideous mouths, expressive

of their intense disgust of me and of my race. They shook the scalp of poor Willis against my very eyes, and I don't doubt wanted to serve mine the same way. Then leaving me helplessly tied, they went out to catch the horses. The difficulty with which this feat was accomplished made them wilder than ever in their rage against me. I saw them deliberate, and knew by their gestures they were reserving me for some fearful doom. At last a tall Indian went without the circle and succeeded in leading one of the horses, a fiery, vicious animal who had given me great trouble, and who, in his looks and movements seemed almost demoniac. Close to me they led him. I felt his hot breath against my face, and more than once his hoof threatened to crush my foot to atoms. I thought that in some way they intended my death by that monstrous gray horse, and so they did, but I had not calculated for the extreme cruelty of which they are capable. What was my horror when I found they were going to bind me on the animal, torture him, and set him free.

"Oh! grandfather—you are a second Mazeppa!" cried Arty, listening meanwhile with hushed, intense interest.

"A distinction for which I paid cruelly," said the old man, folding his arms and gazing into the fire. "They then lifted me upon the horse, he all the while rearing, backing, snorting, and seating me with my back toward his head, they tied my feet under him. This made them great trouble, for the horse was nearly unmanageable, what with terror and viciousness, but for every annoyance he gave them they paid me in blows or wounds with their knives. They then threw a rope about my arms, drawing and lashing my back on the animal, another around my neck, tying that to the neck of the horse, from whence it was carried to his tail, making it serve the purpose of a crupper. In this way they secured me to the frantic beast, and all the while the demons incarnate danced, yelping and screaming about me, testifying their infernal delight in the anticipated suffering that was to overtake me. They lashed the horse, not sparing me, shouted in his ears, thrust their knives into him, and with shouts that sounded like thunder, turned him loose. The poor animal with the poor wretch upon him, dashed into the thickest of the woods. The horse, feeling his unusual burden and frantic to rid himself, took his way among the tangled undergrowth, bruising me at every step, throwing me against projecting branches, rearing, plunging, uttering the wildest cries of terror. I longed and prayed for death. I raved and sent up my cries of anguish with his. Sometimes I laid insensible, and then a dreadful blow would bring me to agonizing consciousness. I knew death would come at last, but oh! the awful uncertainty! the sufferings that permeated every bone, nerve, sinew. I can describe nothing like it. It is too dreadful to recall, too frightful to portray."

The old man shuddered as he held his hand before his eyes as if to shut out a fearful spectacle. The young creature before him shuddered too, and tenderly took his hand in her own. Coraline was occupied in watching Harrison who sat nearer the light than she did. "If he

betray any unusual excitement," she thought, as the story progressed, "I tremble for my future. If not—then, heaven be thanked, I do not fear." Harrison's eye had indeed lighted more than once, but his whole exterior was even calmer than that of Frank Reynolds. It was a splendid test.

"Well," continued grandfather Reynolds, the horse at last became exhausted. What prevented him from rolling over and crushing me, heaven only knows. I was dying with hunger, sore in every inch of my body, longing only that death might put an end to my sufferings, partly conscious—just alive, that was all—I seemed to know that my breath was nearly gone and wished to make no effort to retain it. Then there came a long silence—a great blank—and how long after I know not, I found myself lying on a bed in a log-hut, and an angel-faced girl bending over me.

"He has opened his eyes, mother," were the first words I heard, and then all was a blank again. It seems the sagacity of the horse had led him to the first habitation after he was thoroughly subdued. It proved to belong to an eastern family. They treated me with the greatest care, the tenderest consideration. It was months before I was well, and completely cured of a longing to encounter the Indians. I preferred after that a home of my own and the blooming girl in the log-house for a wife.

"And aunt Margaret was your nurse?" said Arty.

"Not this one, my dear; that Margaret sleeps in a grave in the prairie-land."

Somebody proposed music. Frank whirled himself round toward the piano and dissipated the sadness that had settled upon the little company by a vigorous sweep up and down the keys, breaking into a lively barcarole, until singing and mirth became the order of the evening. In one week from that time there was a wedding in the mansion—and Coraline became the wife of the only hope and heir of the Lattisons.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TERRIBLE SHOCK.

"WELL, Sylvester, how is business?"

The question was addressed by a portly old gentleman to his would-be young friend—an exquisitely made-up man.

"Business, sir—a—l—really can not tell, sir. I've left your nephew, sir. I really couldn't stand it."

"What? You don't mean that you've broken the partnership?"

"To be sure I do, sir, and I prophesy Lattison will go to to the dogs—to the dogs, sir."

"Why what do you mean, sir?"

"Just what I say, Mr. Reynolds. Lattison is a queer fish—a little unsettled I should think. Zounds, sir, because I was somewhat attentive to his handsome wife, he picked up a quarrel with me; in fact, once or twice as good as told me to leave the house. I won't put up with an insult, sir, from any man, and so we are no longer friends. Besides, he's living ruinously. Whv. his father's fortune is all run through—

that stud of his would break any man but a millionaire."

"Sorry to hear it, sorry to hear it," responded the old man, with a malevolent shake of the head. "Well, if he gets into trouble he needn't come on his wife's old uncle—can't do a cent's worth for him—not a cent's worth."

The object of their discussion was Harrison Lattison. Old Mr. Lattison was dead. He had left less of a fortune than his family had reason to expect. Mrs. Lattison had gone with Anne, who was married to a western lawyer. Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds had also passed away, Arty had been a wife some time, and Frank was a merchant in the city.

Coraline had been married sixteen years. During that time she had known no wish ungratified. Three children blessed their fireside—Ella, a girl of thirteen, Harrison, in his sixteenth year, and a little pet called Charley, of some six or seven summers. It was true that Mr. Lattison had been living agreeably fast. His house was a wonder of beauty and convenience—his conservatory a miracle of sweets and color, while his splendid barouche, and elegant coachman in livery were the envy of the city. Harrison had shown a great dislike of his partner, Mr. Sylvester, who really took great pains to be attentive to the ladies of his acquaintance, and who frequented Lattison's much more than was agreeable to either the husband or the wife. This had resulted in the grievance Mr. Sylvester complained of, and that in the dissolving of the partnership.

Meanwhile Harrison went on making bad speculations until matters came to a crisis, and, one day, he found himself a bankrupt. This was terrible as death to him. Could he, who had all his life been accustomed to luxuries, come down to humble quarters and niggardly fare? Never. The crisis came and passed, leaving him subject to a singular hallucination. The house was Cora's; his father had given it to her. That was, therefore, safe. He would not burden her—would not suffer her wordless accusations—he would begin life anew in some strange capacity and leave her to think him dead—and then he should see what he should see. It was a sudden resolution, born of a temporarily disordered brain. He sat down to his table, and wrote with a desperate hand, the following note:

"DEAR WIFE:—When you read this, forget me. I am going to throw myself into the river where the current runs strongest and deepest, and cursed be he who attempts to find my body. I know you love me dearly, and I would say here, it is my wish that you do not marry again. I have failed, but the house and furniture are yours to do as you please with. Adieu, and God bless you.

"Ever yours, even in death,

"HARRISON LATTISON."

This he wrote, signed and sealed; he smiled over his cruel determination, with the heartlessness of derangement. He then went to his wife's dressing-room (she had gone out), and left it on her table. Such a singular hallucination had taken possession of his mind that he laughed at his own cunning.

"She has often said that if I died she would never marry," he said to himself, standing before an exquisite little picture representing his

beautiful wife; "this will put her to the test—and I shall see, now, the depth of her sorrow."

Again and again he read the note, each perusal seeming to plunge him deeper and deeper in thought. As he looked up, his glance fell upon pictures whose prices would have beggared some men, statuary upon which the soft light fell like sifted gold, hangings whose gleams took the hues of rich metals, and swept the thick carpets as the glossy locks of dusky beauties fall on the woven fabrics of their robing. He walked idly to the window, attracted by some commotion in the street. Opposite, at the end of a small square, dangled three gilt balls. It was the only blot upon that respectable neighborhood, as he himself had often said—that detestable broker's shop. He had many times wished that some friendly fire might turn the place into ashes—it seemed so natural that ashes should be the end of things. Now a cart rattled down and stood fronting the door. A few bundles were thrown in, a chair or two, an old desk, and the window stood blank, deserted. The broker had broken. No more to him should come faded old women with faded old shawls bringing their hard-earned treasures on which to raise a few pennies that they might buy bread for hungry mouths. No more would gaunt and haggard men turn the corner—gazing with fierce eyes beyond them to see if they were noticed or recognized; or little children, their rags and tatters flying, creep with bare blue feet to that place of Jewish extortion. The broker as well as the merchant had dead failed. As Harrison stood there vainly dreaming, a strange, wild thought came into his brain. It was this: he would turn broker, and enjoy the daily pleasure of beholding his wife and children. For a long time he laughed and chuckled like a child, at the idea; then leaving the note where his wife would be sure to see it when she came home, he hurried from the house, toward the shop of an old Jew by the name of Elam, and found him at home.

"Well, what do you want?" he cried, wrinkling his long nose, his eyes like two coals burning in the center, shining straight on his visitor.

"To hire the little hole opposite my house for a poor friend," was the reply.

"Vat little hole? Ish it in de pavement?" queried the old man, shrewdly.

"No, no; you know well enough what I mean—the three balls."

"Eh! dat ish it—you turn broker—ha! it would pe goot," and the eyes twinkled with a Satanic merriment.

"Nonsense; I came to hire the shop for a friend," said Harrison, nervously.

"Ah! but hash bin offered three dollars a week for him."

"Too much; but for the sake of securing it, I'll give you three and a quarter, and pay you down for two months."

"Done; you is a shentleman."

"I wish I could return the compliment," said Harrison.

The Jew laughed, wrinkling his long nose, twinkling his bright eyes. He would have thought, if he had been in the secret, that this

was very queer work for a man who contemplated his own funeral.

"When will your friend take ze shop?" asked the son of Abraham.

"Perhaps in two days," was the reply.

"And if he not pay me goot when ze two months gone?"

"Then turn him out."

"Ayl I turn him out," was his quick answer; "do it a great many times. I says money or out—and it is shenerally out—he, he!"

Harrison smiled, in fact he chuckled to himself. In his hallucination it seemed such a fine thing to deceive this old wretch of a Jew—to deceive his wife and everybody. A fine chance it would be to learn how they regarded him—passing judgment on his actions, giving false versions of his life—making love to his widow! oh! it was too good; and he rubbed his palms together as he thought, and screamed internally with laughter.

His next movement was toward an old clothes shop. Here he exchanged his garments for a dusky, bottle-green suit, and learned the art understood by Jews, of dyeing his skin and hair in such a manner that the disguise was most complete, especially when aided by a false beard and mustache. In this make-up he was quite as handsome, perhaps presented a more imposing appearance than in his usual garb. It gave an Israelitish cast to his features and made the representative of a cast-off nation kingly in exterior and splendid in face. Quietly he entered the forsaken shop as if he had forgotten his previous existence, and domiciled himself there. The strange malady of mind under which he labored precluded any feeling of regret at his change in life, at his separation from a beloved family. He was like a child in an absorbing play—forgetting himself in the fascination of personating somebody else. Before night the few humble household articles which were needed to furnish his narrow quarters arrived, and he was established. Coolly and composedly on the following morning he read the following paragraph in the morning paper:

"It is our painful duty to record, etc. . . . left his home under melancholy circumstances, etc. . . . afflicted family, etc. . . . one of our sterling citizens, previous to . . . etc., etc."

He had now commenced in good earnest—and, quietly seated opposite his grief-stricken family, amused himself with his disguise.

CHAPTER IX.

A WIDOW, YET A WIFE.

CORALINE, unconscious of the strange hallucination that had overtaken her husband, or the sudden failure, was spending a pleasant afternoon with a friend. She was yet a beautiful woman, looking scarcely older than when, sixteen years before, she had given her hand so trustingly to Harrison. The remembrance of his early malady had become like a dream to her, and though she had met with trouble in the loss of her parents, she had been so shielded and cherished, that age sat lightly on her. She was yet scarcely thirty-seven, and the little daughter, Lila Lattison, was a miniature edition of her mother. Mrs. Lattison, was a great favorite

with all who knew her. The mistress of her own home, she was also the delight of each circle that numbered her among its members. Her husband had lavished every care and attention upon her. She was a finished musician, an accomplished artist, and adorned her beautiful home with every grace belonging to the feminine character.

She stood in the conservatory with her friend and hostess. Twilight was gathering. They were admiring a superb calla lily, through whose creamy, crystal-like veins the rays from the sinking sun sent a crimson so delicate that it seemed the touch of some spirit, mingling the hues of heaven with the tints of earth.

"By the way, have you seen that lily Harrison bought me last week?" asked Cora, of her friend.

"No, but I am told it excels nature," was the reply.

"It is a wonderful work of art," Cora responded. "Harrison was tempted to its purchase, because it once belonged to a friend with whom his family became acquainted in England—a lady Catharine Worthington, who had a great deal of trouble, poor thing, and whose little daughter, I have heard said, is the disputed heiress of fifty thousand pounds which she will probably never recover. You must come and see it, for I am sure you will admire it as much as I do. But I must hurry home—Harrison would never eat his supper without me."

The house of Mrs. Lattison was but a few blocks from that of her friend. Oh! how little she knew the seeming trouble—so real to her—that was so soon to fall upon her defenseless head, as she neared that beloved place.

"Charley, love, stand up straighter," she said to her little boy, as they passed gayly on, "or you will never be a gentleman."

"I can't, mother; I want a cane like Harry's—a gold-headed cane, his is, but I'll be content with a silver one with two cunning little tassels. I know it's the cane that makes gentlemen stand up so straight."

"What an odd child!" said Cora, turning to Ella, whose sweet face, framed in its blue and white, reflected her mother's smile.

"How very quiet it looks," said Mrs. Lattison, glancing up at the window-blinds. "I don't think your father has returned yet. Did he speak of an engagement, Ella?"

"I think not, mother, but you know he is not at home sometimes till the last moment."

The bell rung. Bridget Bumble, stouter and louder voiced than ever, let them in.

"Is Mr. Lattison in, Bridget?"

"It's not to me positive knowledge that he is, but he's been scudderin' round the house like a cat sence you went out, Missis Cora."

"What! has he been at home all the afternoon?"

"That's true he has, boderin' me entirely by askin' when would ye be home. And ag'in it is he's gone after ye."

"Gone after me!" exclaimed Cora, in astonishment. "Oh! then he'll soon be back when he finds we are not there—but it is strange we did not meet him, though I suppose he has gone round by another street."

"Well, what did the mistress say?" queried

Tim, who as usual was lounging and smoking after his customary nap. It is needless to record that Tim's place was a sinecure.

"Not at all surprised," said Bridget. "Indeed, I don't believe she ever thinks of the ould times."

"Well, I've seen it comin' on him, and it wouldn't surprise me in the laist if he'd one of his ould turns as bad as iver. There's the look in his eye I don't like, and the way he moves about from one thing to the odther isn't right and reasonable for any sane man. Jist as he used—there he's a-singing to himself and a-smilin' and a-mutterin'. The saints protiect us if he'll have 'em as bad as he iver did. It's what I've bin seein' wid me eyesshut for months an' months."

"Ah! poor lady—it's her I pity, an' she so on-conscious of it. An' it's afraid I am to go to bed of a night for fear I'll be dragged out of me sleep and murdered before I'm awake."

Mrs. Lattison followed her daughter into the latter's dressing-room.

"I believe I'll lay my bonnet on your bed and go down immediately to practice. The clock has struck six, and when your father comes, you know, we don't like to practice. He is so good a husband, so excellent a father."

There was a musical *soirée* in prospect in which Mrs. Lattison was to show her fine ability. Seven o'clock came, and she was deep in the intricacies of a difficult waltz, when the door opened and Ella entered.

"Has your father come?" asked her mother, without glancing up.

"No, mother, but what is this?"

"What, darling?" and still the bright eyes were bent on all but impossible chords and frantic quavers.

"A note, mother—in papa's writing, I should think."

"Oh! a note, child, let me see it," and the hand was stretched forth, now—the face all expectation.

"I found it on your dressing table, mamma," and Ella gave it to her, her bright face yet unblanched of its smiles.

Tremblingly Cora held the fatal missive. The moment she felt its touch, a deathly faintness seized her—a presentiment of coming evil gave her a sharp chill. Her face grew white; she looked at it as a thing afar off. Slowly she opened—hurriedly read it—then came a cry such as you may have heard once, reader—a voiced woe, piteous with anguish, fright and horror.

"Mother!" Ella was at her side, grasping the clenched hands, her own sweet face distorted with fear. "Mother, what is it? What has happened? Where is my father?"

"Dead—dead!" came in piteous gaspings. "Oh! heaven, be merciful. Ella, your father is dead—drowned!"

Shrieks and uproar—faintings—frantic flying from place to place—was the order of that terrible hour. The physician was sent for—Frank was summoned—Arty was ill and could not come. The house was a caravansary until the following day. Tim and Bridget had their hands full. Old Mr. Reynolds, the uncle, stalked from room to room, uttering disagreeable adjectives.

tives as the cost of this and that elegance occurred to his mind.

"Fool and his money soon parted," he sneered, tapping the beautiful statue of a Hebe contemptuously with his cane. "Sylvester foresaw it—smart fellow that Sylvester; saved himself remarkably. Ah! there you are!" he muttered, as Tim flourished his immense handanna over the head of the statue, solicitous to remove the slightest dust. "You're out of a place."

"Meaning me, sir?" queried Tim, looking up. "Oh! no, sir—it's in me place I am," and he wiped away so vigorously that the dust caused the old man to sneeze.

"Look out, you rascal!" he cried, "you've got no master to indulge you now, remember."

"Sure, an' it's the same as if I had," quoth Tim, indignantly. "I'll not be paying the house, nather me nor Bridget, till the mistress puts me out."

"Humph—mistress—she's not worth a farthing now, man; how will you get your wages?"

"Troth, an' won't I work for me board?" queried Tim, opening his eyes. "Sure an' I will if the board be but a crust an' that not large enough for two iv us. It's not money I cares about—it's Bridget 'll 'arn the money—for more than me, mark ye—she'd work her hands off for the mistress, an' she'll do it if it's necessary it is."

"You're a numskull like the man that hired you," muttered the surly old fellow, angry in his selfish heart at finding so much good in an inferior.

"It's not you I'll be hearin' call Mr. Harrison names, nor any odther man," he responded. "There wasn't many fit to walk in me master's shoes; an' if iver he turns up—which mayn't be likely, as down in the ocean he is—he'll prove it, ye better belave. Och! the crusty ould bach that he is," added Tim, as the object of his wrath moved down stairs. "I'd like to fetch him up wid a kick clare to the bottom of the steps."

In the hall below, uncle Reynolds, the dissatisfied, met a magnificent individual.

"Very unfortunate, very; but it was well he left her something—that is, he didn't leave it, but the house belonged to her—a gift from his father, I believe," said Mr. Reynolds, at the same time patting the youngest boy on the head as he passed, to the child's great terror.

"Yes, left a handsome widow, though," said Sylvester, with a significant leer. "Still young, charming—make a very good match yet, shouldn't wonder."

"Hum! shouldn't wonder," echoed the elderly relative, with an expressive gesture. "I always thought there was a wrong streak in that fellow's brain. He was an enigma to me. How he became a settled man of family, I can't for the life of me tell. I heard that my brother knew before his marriage with Cora, that there was trouble of that kind. I am astonished that the union was allowed."

"Yes, she's a charming woman," said Mr. Sylvester, still soliloquizing.

He had a face like those wax heads one sees in barbers' windows, and, like them, all false. His forehead and nose were as straight as a rule—every other feature was mathematically proportioned; but he was fifty, wore false hair,

false teeth, a false complexion and a false bust, though a very military one.

"Well, well; in time initiate yourself into her good graces—that is all I have to say."

Poor Cora; she was plunged in the deepest affliction. Her husband had been an object, always, of idolatry. She robed herself in deep mourning.

Days, weeks, months passed, and still the same rigid propriety. She seldom spoke of her husband save to her children. Her sorrow was her own—too sacred, too great for worldly eyes to look upon.

CHAPTER X.

THE PAWNBROKER AT HOME.

MEANTIME, the new broker was an object of unlimited curiosity. Who could he be? The last proprietor was a stooping skeleton, with knees and elbows threatening to develop into rags, and an impudent resolution in his thin face as he peered into every window. But this man was a gentleman—so tall, so superb a figure.

The young lady who lived next door to the Lattisons declared him magnificent; and, as she was given to reading old-fashioned novels, she put him down at once for a nobleman in disguise.

"If there was only some way of learning about him," she said, confidentially, to her lady's maid; "I should like to find out if he is really a gentleman. By his walk and bearing I am about certain; but then, his business!"

"Why! I shouldn't mind going there with something just to please you," said Jennie, who wanted to see the man just as much as her mistress did.

"Well, suppose you do, Jennie. Put on an old hood and cloak; and, by the way, I shouldn't mind having a little extra change—papa is growing so stingy, and I will pay you for your trouble."

"Oh! no occasion, miss, I'm sure; and, thank you," which latter clause was equivalent to saying that of course she expected something.

Jennie made up her bundle—an old satin dress, a shawl, almost as good as new, only out of fashion, an antique gold pencil-case, and a queer miniature of somebody's grandmother, set in brilliants, that had been found by one of the family in the streets of Liverpool, and which the young lady had often laughed at for its oddness and age. The gold and the brilliants were dim, and not worth much.

At the same time that the girl entered the broker's shop, there went in a tall, lean-looking woman, of an uncertain age, who held a child of some ten or twelve summers by the hand. The child made a comical picture. Her pretty head with its flaxen curls was hidden in an over-large bonnet of the coarsest straw—evidently of home manufacture. Her little hands were incased in loose, large, wrinkled gloves; her dress was entirely out of fashion, being long, dowdy and uncouth, while two pretty little feet tried to show themselves under the creasing of stout, homely morocco shoes. Jennie felt like laughing outright at this diminutive, dressed-up specimen of childhood, but there was something in the lovely blue eyes upturned to hers, something in the stern, pale face of the woman who stood guard over her, that

checked the disposition to make mirth, and she turned quite soberly toward the broker.

He stood there, serene, dark and handsome. His piercing eyes put her quite out of countenance. His air—so Jennie told her mistress—would well become a great lord; “and oh! but he is handsome, miss. He showed such white teeth as he talked. But, dear me, there was the queerest woman there, and the oddest child; and when I laid that picture on the counter, you should have seen the old creature start, and come forward and look, and look at it, and look at me, till her mouth opened, and her eyes shone, and I really thought she was going to eat me. I do believe she was a poor thing, and tempted to steal that old miniature if she could.”

“But, did he really give you any money, Jennie, for those old duds?”

“Oh! the money, miss; why, here it is—six dollars, ma’am; and he gave to the utmost he could afford, so he said, and four months to redeem them.”

“Why, that shawl cost me twenty-five only summer before last,” said the young lady; “but never mind; it’s a good way to sell old duds. But come, tell me how he looked, and what he said, and whether he really is as handsome near, as he seems from my window.”

While Jennie is entering into particulars, it will be worth while to return to the three balls, and witness the close of the interview between the pale woman, the little child and the broker.

The latter had noticed something peculiar in the couple who sought his attention. Perhaps his heart yearned toward the frail, perishing beauty of the sweet-faced child. He gazed at her long and earnestly, then broke the silence by saying:

“Well, madam?”

She came forward, and seemed grateful for his respectful look and manner. She was a singular being in appearance, so very tall, so weird in her face. Depositing a small bundle on the counter, which could bring but a meager price, she waited his inspection. Her cheeks had not lost the unnatural red that had flushed them as the last comer went out, nor her eyes the singular light.

“Oh, sir,” she cried, eagerly, “I’m afraid you will think very strangely of me; but, if you would please let me look at the miniature that you just took of that young woman.”

“Certainly,” said the broker, smilingly, passing it into her hands.

“Oh, yes, it is the very one; it must be Catharine—my lady—oh, sir, I am so much overcome, you must excuse me,” and she leaned her head on her thin hand.

“Have you really found it? Is that the miniature you talked so much about?” lisped the thin, unchildish voice. “Oh, Bentley! I am so glad.”

“Yes, child, I have found it, but, alas! it is not mine, Miss Catharine, not mine, you see,” she replied, in a mournful voice; “though, perhaps,” she added, her face brightening, “the gentleman knows who brought it in, and I can learn where *she* got it, and may be, recover it. You see, sir,” she went on in a lady-like

manner, “I am very anxious indeed to find out about it.”

“I am sorry I can’t enlighten you,” said the broker, his voice and manner full of interest; “but I don’t know the young woman, nor where she belongs. Most of the respectable people who come here, when they give names, give assumed ones, and many of them never call again.”

For a moment the woman held back, as if her pride had been touched by these allusions; but it was only a moment.

“Oh! then, sir, perhaps you will sell it,” she cried, eagerly. “If you could only let me have it, sir, for the trifle you gave her, or something over, perhaps, in time, I may be able to offer you a hundred dollars for the favor.”

She spoke eagerly, clutching at the counter with both hands, and her prospective offer of a hundred dollars seemed so almost ludicrous that the broker smiled.

“I assure you, sir,” she continued, excitedly, “it is not worth much to anybody but me, sir—this little child and myself. Those stones are not real, sir—they were, once, or rather the good jewels have been taken out, and paste substituted.”

“You have a keen eye,” said the broker.

“Ah! sir, I have seen precious stones enough, in my time, to detect the imitation readily. My husband was a jeweler,” she added, her voice faltering a little. “He often said my eye was as good as a glass.”

“You seem very much interested in this miniature,” said the broker, taking up the tarnished oval frame and scanning it closely, during which time the woman trembled visibly.

“Yes, sir, I am. It—it belonged to the mother of this poor little orphan, who is an English girl, and has been cruelly wronged and kept out of her rightful property. For over ten years it has been lost and mourned. She is eleven—you mightn’t think it, sir, being so small of her age and not over strong.”

“So it is a family relic, I presume.”

“A family relic, sir; the likeness of this dear little child’s grandmother, and if you could by any means let me have it, you don’t know what a favor you would be conferring—indeed, sir, you don’t know.”

“I will do this, madam,” said the broker, impressed by her grief and earnestness. “Come here in a month; if the woman redeems it, I will ascertain who she is, and what it can be obtained for. If she never returns the trifle shall be yours for the same amount I gave her for its keeping—if you are not able to pay me that, why I will make it a present to the little blue-eyed lady here—and she shall only thank me.”

“Oh! sir, I will work my fingers to the bone but what I will repay you for your kindness,” replied the tall woman, tears of gratitude which she strove in vain to repress, falling from her eyes. “Come, Catharine, my little lady, thank this kind, good gentleman, who does not know what a weight he lifts from two grateful hearts.”

“I’m sure I thank you, sir,” and the smallest white hand, the most perfect model of a child’s hand he had ever seen, was held toward the

counter. The broker shook it very gently as he replied, in even softer tones:

"You are very welcome, both of you; it is a very trifling service on my part."

Another moment and the woman and her charge were walking rapidly down the street.

"Oh! Catharine, Catharine; God is good!" the woman said, with emphasis, clasping the child's hand so tightly that she exclaimed:

"Bentley, you are so glad for something, that do you know you hurt my hand?"

"Do I, darling? Well, it's worth it; worth being hurt for; worth laboring all these long, dark, awful years, feeling that others were feeding off your dishes, others were trading with your gold; it's all worth it, Catharine—I should say, my lady," she added, her voice changing.

"Oh! pray don't, good Bentley; it hurts me to hear you say that. No matter what comes, you must always call me Catharine, won't you? But I don't see, after all, *what* makes you so glad. To be sure you have found poor dear grandmamma's likeness, but she has been gone these many, many years, and the frame isn't worth any thing?"

"That frame is worth half a million," replied the tall woman, solemnly.

"Why, Bentley—I hope you are not going to be crazy," said the child, with an odd seriousness.

"Crazy! ha! ha! I've heard of such things as people being turned crazy for joy, but I think my old brain is too strong for that. It has borne the shock of your mamma's death and your misfortunes, poor little soul! it can bear more."

"Well, I only hope you will get the miniature, since it pleases you so, but I'm sure I can't see why it should," said the child, composedly.

"Never you mind, Catharine, darling, and when I call you my lady, as is your proper right and title, don't you say nothing to me; it does me good, you see. And I think I'm not forward, nor hopeful, nor presuming either in saying that one of these days, not very far off either, Catharine rides in her own carriage, as she should, and mayhap poor old Bentley beside her."

"Of course," said the girl, with her unchildish seriousness, "whatever comes, you shall *always* be close to my side. I am very grateful to you for your goodness and patience; I only wish you would let me show you now, more than you do, how much I love you; but you won't."

By this time the two had approached a large, smoky tenement, whose hanging shutters, rattling windows, uneven doors and unpainted and dilapidated exterior told of a general decrepitude. The stains upon its sides, seen in the moonlight, looked like tears wept ages and ages ago, and every broken and hanging clasp and seemed to have a meaning of its own, more of the sad than agreeable past. Very soon the quaint tall woman, and the little, queer, oldish child passed into the narrow entrance and were lost to view.

After they had gone, the broker stood some minutes in deep thought. "I have certainly seen that woman before," he mused to himself, "her countenance is as familiar as if we met but

yesterday—yet where?" Again and again the thin, stern face, so impossible to forget when once seen, came up before his vision. "I have seen her before—but not here," he still soliloquized; "it must have been in England. The child is wronged—she is English—her name is Catharine—can she be in any way connected with the Lady Catharine with whom my mother corresponded? It must be that I saw her in that family—yes, I remember now—"

His soliloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Tim Bumble. Tim came in a new character and sidled up to the counter, looking askance at the broker as if caught in the act or with the intention of stealing.

"An' sir, if I may be so bowld, do ye take in watches, sir?" queried Tim, bringing his two hands closed upon the counter.

"What do you mean—have you a watch to pawn?" asked the man in disguise.

"By all the powers if ye haven't a voice like the masher that's drowned and the same figger, batin the whiskers and beard," cried the man, taken by surprise. "Bridget said the mistress noticed it too—a-ye'll excuse me, sir—it's only dr'amin', I am—I'm mighty apt to dr'ame whin I'm wide awake. Sure it's a good watch it is, an' pure gowld—and no harm aither to put it where it'll kape safe."

The broker took the watch: it was his own. Something seemed to go through his brain like lightning, when he lifted it in his hand. The two separate beings he sometimes seemed conflicted; for a moment he was himself, trembling under a sense of possible degradation, anxious to fly to his family and make reparation for his long absence—then that singular dual who claimed no affinity with any human creature, who existed only to hide all traces of his former kindred relations to the world—drove the other from his mind, and he was the broker again, chuckling over his success in duping the very persons to whom he was nearest and dearest; and he rejoiced over the cunning that enabled him to hide his identity while he had mind enough in full force to understand all that was passing around him, and to transact the business he had undertaken.

"How came you by this watch?" he asked, sternly. "It is not yours."

The Irishman gave one terrified glance at the eyes that seemed to read him.

"It's very quare, intirely, that you come to know that," he said, in a thick voice, "an' sure though I'm not a man that the looks of me would suppose could own a gowld watch—but if ye'll be aisy wid me, I'll tell ye. It's the son of the poor gentleman as drowned himself, wid your figger an' form intirely, as put the watch into me hands for a lean on't, ye may say, an' the thought struck me that mebbe the mistress was wanting money. Ye'll not whisper it, but it's afraid I am the young gentleman 'll go to the bow-wows and break the heart of his modther, though I know it's in poor circumstances they be," and he shook his head wofully.

"How came your master to drown himself?" asked the broker, chuckling over his secret.

"Sure an' his bizness wint wrong intirely, an' whin there was nothin' to the fore, why he wint an' put himself out of the way. An' it

wasn't the fault of him aither, for he'd a verra bad constichusion."

"And his wife?" queried the broker, "she's as gay as ever I suppose."

"Gay, is it? Ye'd better be saying gay, ye had. If iver a woman was sp'illing herself, an' lettin' her good looks go hang, it's the misthress. Och! it's verra dark she kapes, an' niver a smile upon her swate countenance. Sure, an' I think she married him for life and death too—indade I do."

"She doesn't have much company, I perceive," said the broker.

"Company—it's company she won't look to, only barrin' her own sither and brodther, Bridget, who's me wife, an' as smart a woman as the nixt if not smarter, says there's a power of gentlemen that come there, jist for to make love to the widdy—but she jist shakes her head, an' Bridget's the one to tell them the misthress is engaged so they will know what she manes."

"That oldest boy, you say, is rather fast."

"Yis, jist as fast as he can be widout the money. If the father 'd a lived—heaven rest his soul—it's afraid I am he'd had big throuble with him; but poor boys, sir, even if they makes a show, sir, can't have their own ways on'y to a degree—that ye know."

The broker shook his head, but Tim, grown garrulous, detailed the circumstances of the family from Bridget's standpoint, and finally ended with the sagacious remark that Bridget thought their best course would be to take boarders.

At this the broker started—it seemed to wake up that other self for a moment, and a keen shock of regret passed through his mind. But he conquered himself in time to hide all signs of feeling; and giving a larger sum on the time-piece than Tim had been told to expect, he watched the Irishman's futile attempts to make his route more circuitous as he left the shop.

CHAPTER XI.

TAKING BOARDERS.

THE broker diminished his light, and standing in the doorway (it was a summer night) looked over the way. Six months had passed, and as yet there had been no sound or sight of merriment. The curtains and inner blinds were closely drawn. Sometimes the tones of the piano could be heard—they were no longer full, merry or harmonious. But the pseudo-broker stands by his shop door; let him speak for himself.

"Well, the play progresses—and I know pretty well what people think of me now. My wife's precious old uncle, it seems, never thought my brain sound. By some I'm looked upon as a swindler, and but few, very few, in summing up my character, say, 'He was an honest man.' All this time they think me dead and food for fishes," he broke into a nervous laugh. "No matter, I'm careless upon that point—let the world wag and spout—am I not Benjamin the Jew and the broker?"

"So that contemptible Sylvester, my partner—he whose envious tongue was half my ruin, probably thinks that my wife looks very charming in black. He's a great favorite with my wife's dear old uncle—ah! there he goes deliberately up the steps of my wife's house. Mistaken for once, my dear fellow. Your exquisite portrait will hardly gain admission into that house to-night. He comes down the steps with a hang-dog look. I know what the fellow means. My eldest precious is in a bad way. Sent my own watch to pawn. Something must be done, or else his mother will die of a broken heart. Charley, the rogue, is a thorough boy, with a great heart and generous impulses. He will become a good man if the example of his brother does not spoil him. My little Ella is still fresh and beautiful. She will be having lovers soon, but, thank God! in her position, no mercenary ones. I can watch over her better, perhaps, than if she knew my true relation toward her. Sometimes my brain is confused—sometimes

I feel that I am wronging them—but no, no! that can not be—that can not be," and talking still to himself, he entered his shop and retired to his old place.

Mrs. Lattison sat smiling and sighing over a small miniature. A letter, broadly edged with black, lay open before her.

It was from Anne bringing intelligence of her mother's death. Old Mrs. Lattison was gone—had died breathing blessings on her son, of whose supposed fate she had not been allowed to learn. Anne's letter was like herself, calm, unimpassioned, but filled with expressions of sorrow for her brother's misfortune and sad suicide, and her mother's less terrible fate. Misfortune had also overtaken her—her husband had failed, and her great regret was that she was not in a situation to offer her sister a home.

"Who would have thought, sixteen happy years ago," she wrote, "when we all met at the Grove with our loved ones around us, that in this time we should be separated—some of us dead—and others in affliction?"

Again the deserted wife lifted the miniature. "If I could have seen him only once more," she said, the tears gathering, "if I had only stayed at home that day! I see him in dreams how often—and always he has come back to me from some long journey, with the white light of heaven shining in his face."

A light footstep was heard. Mrs. Lattison gathered the letters together and placed them away. Ella came in to her for some advice. She was startled at her mother's look.

"Mamma, do tell me if you have any new grief," she asked, as her mother sighed heavily.

"My dear," was her reply, "I believe we are growing very poor."

"Poor! oh, no, mother—uncle would not surely let us be very poor."

"Ah! my child, how little you know of men's hearts. He is entirely unlike my father, your dear grandfather, whom you remember. He has an object in his kindness, a selfish object."

"Oh! now, mamma, that is hardly charitable. Think how beautifully he spoke when he gave me that little present, and some pocket-money. Here—I thought of buying some new dresses, but you shall have it all."

"Thank you, darling. This will do something, but not much. We must begin to cast about us and see what can be done. I might teach music but for my failing health. You can as yet do nothing."

"Why mother—must we go out to work?—why need we?" asked Ella, with a mortified air.

"Because we are in debt, my child. Your brother is not careful with the money he earns—there is nothing coming in—and we shall lose the little we have, if we do not make some extra exertion."

Ella was thoughtful.

"What motive do you think uncle can have?" she asked, a few moments afterward.

"He wishes me to marry Mr. Sylvester," replied her mother.

Ella raised her hands with a cry of horror. "Marry him!—that frightful man—I hate him—it makes me tremble to go near him. Why, mamma, you wouldn't dream of such a thing!"

"Of course not, my dear," said Mrs. Lattison, quietly.

"Oh! uncle Ben really don't want you to do that—only think how much father disliked him; I always saw it."

"It is true—for so uncle Reynolds has told me. Mr. Sylvester he considers a very good match, says he is very rich, and—in fact—has long loved me. I told him no earthly power could induce me to marry again, and with that he went away angry. Henceforth, I have no doubt we must depend upon ourselves."

"Marry that Mr. Sylvester! call him father! Why

"I'd a great deal rather you'd marry that broker opposite. He is a gentleman, and he does look like poor papa," said the young girl, with energy.

"Hush, Ella, hush!" said her mother, her cheek slightly tinged, "you must not speak so thoughtlessly. I shall never marry," and a deep sigh ended the sentence.

"I hope not," responded Ella, after a pause. "It seems to me we can think of some way to get along among us all. Let me see—what can we do?"

"I think I shall look with favor upon Bridget's plan," said her mother.

"And what is that?"

"Taking boarders. The good soul will not leave me. She says she can do about everything, with my superintendence, and a small girl to help her. It will keep us all very busy, for I shall give your little brother entirely to your care, and in time, I think, it can be made profitable."

"And we shall have all sorts of people here," said Ella, her face growing longer.

"No, my dear; we need take no one without suitable recommendation. I know of several—among them your uncle Frank and his wife, who would come and pay a fair board in order to help us along. Henry can keep accounts, Charley help with the errands, Tim be porter, while you, with a little chambermaid, can oversee the rooms up-stairs; so, if we all do our duty faithfully, I don't see but we can make money."

"Oh, mother, I like it," said Ella, after a moment's consideration, her face brightening.

Not long after, preparations were made for turning the handsome house of Mrs. Lattison into a genteel boarding-house. Bustle and confusion reigned throughout. Rooms were papered and painted, and sundry improvements made. The old uncle, Reynolds, looked on with haughty indifference.

"Let her go on," he said, sneeringly, as he listened to the plan; "she'll ruin herself in one year—just one year. I'll give her that time."

"I'll engage board there," said the discomfited Sylvester. "She can't refuse me, and I'll take care if I don't get her nobody else shall."

"That's right," said uncle Reynolds, patting his favorite on the shoulder; "true blue, Syl. Never give up the ship—you'll get her yet."

Whether or not because the widow was handsome that the house filled up so rapidly, we can not tell; suffice it to say, there was no lack of boarders. There were old men and young men, and it was noticeable that the former always handed their cups to Mrs. Lattison, while the latter passed theirs, if possible, by the hands of pretty Ella.

CHAPTER XII.

A LITTLE PLAIN TALK.

"Now, Mr. Henry, it's no place for ye to be smoking. I don't allow me own husband to take his pipe here; so, off wid ye, or ye'll fill all the victuals full of the nasty smell."

"Don't be cross, Bridget," said the boy, savcily puffing almost in her face. He was a gentlemanly looking little fellow, and very much like his father.

"I say, Bridget, what was that beef a pound?"

"More than you'll aim for a week to come. I'm thinkin'," said Bridget, angrily.

"Oh, I'm living on my interest," responded the boy, throwing himself on a seat.

"Livin' on yer mother's hard work an' mine, ye'd better say," she angrily retorted. "Would ye be kind enough, Mr. Henry Lattison, to till me the time o' day?"

Bridget's face, as she said this, was a study for a painter—so triumphant, so cunning, so searching. The boy started, took his cigar from his mouth, and clenched his fist.

"Well, what of that?" he asked, fiercely.

"'Pose your mother knew it, my young sir. Don't you think it would take the heart of her out—her son a pawning of his dead father's—"

"Sh!" cried the boy, casting a fearful glance

about him; "for goodness' sake, Bridget, hold your tongue."

"I will, if ye behave yourself as a boy should, an' help your poor mother," returned Bridget, with warmth, "even if I've to pay for the pawning myself."

"Oh, you needn't do that; I've got friends," replied the boy, sulkily.

"Yis, an' one of 'em's Mr. Sylvester, a-worritin' your mother's life out of her. I s'pose ye wish she'd marry him for the sake of your idleness."

"I wish she would, for her own," said the boy; "she wouldn't have to drudge any more, and you—"

"I'd have to march, wouldn't I?" laughed Bridget.

"Oh, don't I wish I'd see him doing it?"

"You may talk as you please; I'll bet mother *does* marry him, and that before long."

"Perhaps ye'll git in a scrape, and run in debt for hundreds of dollars, and thin git him to lend you money, and thin, for the sake of that, to kape your good name up, when you ain't got any, she'd marry him. I've heard tell of such doin's, indade I have; but the curse o' that thing'll follow you to your grave, me lad."

"You've no right to talk to me so," cried the boy, angrily. "He shall marry her, if I can help him, and flinging down his cigar, he left the kitchen."

"There goes the lump of laziness," soliloquized Bridget, picking up the nuisance, and throwing it into the fire. "What wid his laying abed till the folks are all gone, and obliging his sister to wait on him; what wid being impercent to his mother, poor lady, and saucy to me; what wid pawning things to go pleasuring wid, and tazing the whole house, an' borrover money from Mr. Sylvester, he's like to herry the heart out of us all. Oh, sure, the times is different from the good ould times, when there was plinty to the fore, an' I got me three dollars a week and board, and the lady lived illegantly. I don't belave the mistress 'll marry that horrid man wid the marble face; an' I'm sure his heart is marble too, I can see it in his eyes."

At that moment Mrs. Lattison came in. She never had looked more beautiful, though the border of her morning-cap was pinned back, and her sleeves fastened to her shoulder, exposing a healthily-rounded and tinted arm. She paused as she entered.

"Why, Bridget, what is the matter?" she asked, noticing her dejected air.

"I was only thinking, 'm," said the woman, "that if you married Mr. Sylvester, what a sorry heart I'd feel. Sure, it wouldn't be home for me any longer."

"Marry him! why, what put that thought in your mind, Bridget? My dear woman, he's the last man in the world I would marry. Indeed, I wish he was out of the house, for I think his influence over Henry is v ry bad."

"Well may ye say it, Mrs. Lattison, for I've kept a watchful eye over the lad, and sure am I that the man is thyring to gain him to his evil purposes; but since ye've spoken, it's relaved my mind, for I'll work for ye, Mrs. Lattison, till me hands drop off, for the sake of him that's gone. An' as to the boy—he's a good boy in the main, an' if plain talk'll do him any good, why it's plinty he'll git from Bridget, sure."

CHAPTER XIII.

BOARDING THE BROKER.

MRS. LATTISON was summoned into the parlor, shortly after; a gentleman wished to see her. Untying her cap-strings, smoothing her hair and turning down her sleeves, she soon hurried to the partially-darkened room.

As she entered, the man stood with his back toward her, looking intently at a fine painting of her husband. The tall, manly figure, so like that of one whom for months she had mourned as dead, gave her heart a quicker motion; an indescribable sensation thrilled her veins. He turned, hearing her step

—the widow grew deathly pale, for there stood before her the broker, in whom she had noticed more than once a wonderful likeness to her husband.

"Pardon me, madam," he said, in a low tone; "I was pleased with this fine painting. I have somewhere seen a gentleman resembling him.

"In your mirror, likely, thought the woman; but she only bowed.

"I came to see if I could obtain board here. My present boarding-place is too far off for convenience," he said, seeing her sitting, expectant.

"I am very sorry," began Mrs. Lattison; then she paused, thoughtfully.

Why was there such an attraction in this man—such a magnetism in his voice that her pulses leaped at the sound? Why did her heart beat so rapidly?

"I was about to say that my house is full," she added; "but on second thought I believe there is one small room—"

"I prefer a small room," said the broker, hastily.

"And that so high up."

"It makes no difference to me how near the sky I am," replied the other, significantly.

"Then I can accommodate you."

In another moment the broker had gone, but Mrs. Lattison stood deep in thought where he had left her. There was surely a new warmth in her heart—oh, no, no; she must not forget—still, still he was so like Harrison—his face, his bearing, his very voice. And he was coming there—the pawnbroker. Why had she not possessed sufficient courage to refuse him? But, was he not a gentleman? Yes, both in speech and appearance, and she would abide by what she had done.

The following day there was food enough for conjecture among the respectable circle that sat round the table of the handsome widow. The broker was in their midst. Some were uneasy, some dissatisfied, others indignant. It was beneath the station of Mrs. Lattison, they said, to take anything less than merchants, or professional men; and a few remonstrated.

"It is anything, he fails to be a gentleman," was her quiet reply, "tell me and you shall have no further cause of complaint."

Alas! already in the secrecy of her heart, she mourned over that heart's unfaithfulness to the memory of her former husband. Several times had she seen this stranger of distinguished mien but questionable occupation. At church he had for some weeks past sat so near, that the dark, handsome profile of his face—so like dear Harrison's—was always in view. And that profile she carried home with her more than once. Do what she might to banish it, it was always there, and she was haunted by his presence. He alone of all the high-bred company had power to bring the color to her pale cheek, and more than one suspected the truth. Among these was Mr. Sylvester. He came to the old uncle one day in an agony of jealousy.

"What's the matter?" cried Mr. Reynolds, apprehending that the widow had accepted him, and that he was crazy for joy.

"Oh! that infernal pawnbroker!" hissed from between Mr. Sylvester's magnificent false teeth.

"Why—why! what of him, man?"

"Oh! I'm cut out—cut out by an infernal pawnbroker!" groaned the unhappy man, pulling at his perfumed false hair, thereby diminishing the dimensions of his shabby forehead by nearly an inch.

"What? the jaded no, no; it isn't possible—it can't be. That fellow—that Jew—that spout full of 'old coats and beggars' gowns? No, no; you're jealous, Mr. Sylvester, very jealous. I know my niece too well to believe—"

"But I tell you it is so. I see it every day, the influence he is exerting. Yesterday my lord said he should like a lounge in his attic—so Henry tells me—and what does my lady do but send one up out of her own room. The bell rings—is it my lord? Hurry, Jennie, Molly, Bridget, every one of you, and see

what his lordship wants. Oh, I assure you, nothing is too good for him. And she watches him at table, anticipating his slightest wish, heaps his plate, turns red if he only glances at her, and he knows his power, depend on that; he is well aware that his slightest wish is law, the insolent interloper!" and the false teeth grated again.

"Are you sure you ain't jealous?" queried the indignant uncle.

"Sure! Thunder and Mars! Didn't I hear him call Ella 'my dear'—in just such a familiar way as he might have said 'my slippers and dressing gown'—in Mrs. Lattison's boudoir? Sure? Didn't I see him swagger through her parlors, and make himself at home with a deal more impertinence, egad! than we dare, who could buy him, shop and all, for the loose change in our pockets? Don't we all see that every soul in the family, from the youngest up, is magnetized by the impertinent fellow, and are all his humble servants? I declare, 'tis intolerable. It's enough to put pistols into a man's head, only one wouldn't soil one's hands and one's reputation by fighting such fellows. Sure! h'm—d'ye think I hav'n't any brains?"

"Mighty few," thought the old uncle; for it was his opinion that Mr. Sylvester might have won the widow. "We must see to this," he said aloud, giving his cane an extra blow, as he came down the broad staircase. "I'll manage her—let me alone for that. I'll break the broker, or I'll break his head and her folly together. Just you wait patiently. I've handled more than one impertinent beggar in my day."

"But—but you won't say anything of this—this little visit?" said Sylvester, imploringly.

"No, you coward," was the quick, but cool reply.

CHAPTER XIV.

FINDING A WILL.

A room in a dreary building. Neat it was as human hands could make it, but that did not hide the ghastly rents in the walls, nor the great stains formed by the drippings of a century. It was very meager in its furnishing, and yet the bits of paint and elaborate fresco, nearly all torn off by vandal hands proved that the chamber was once tenanted with costly upholstery. Now there were only a few pine chairs and a pine table, a bedstead, an old map, and, next to the fireplace, leaning against the jambs, two huge tubs that seemed recently scoured. The only occupant, at the moment of which we speak, was a child of almost fairy-like proportions, and of exquisite symmetry in face and form. She stood looking dreamily from a window, her beautiful white arms folded, and a smile in her gentle blue eyes. Fair locks hung in circled curls far below her waist. The smile that lightened the lovely expression of her face meant something, for presently a tall, dignified, but very pale, care-worn looking woman entered, bearing some bundles in her hand.

"You might have let me go for them—you were so tired," said the child, springing toward her, and trying to take the parcels from her.

"Let you go? oh, no; that would never do; it's not your place, my little lady; and instead of one, I wish you had twenty servants to wait upon you."

"Don't call yourself a servant, Bentley; you are not a servant. You are just like my mother. You have done everything for me. I sha'n't like it one bit if you call yourself a servant, Bentley."

"Well, well, dear, then I won't; and I don't know that I mean just that either, though I'd willingly serve such a sweet child as you. But, look, my little lady; for once you shall have such a supper as you deserve, and such as you hain't seen since you came from dear old England. See, I have bought cakes, a little cream and some fruit. To be sure you can't eat it from silver as you ought to, and as is your right, but it will taste good even on my homely delf."

"And so there used to be silver on my mother's table?" said little Catharine, her eyes brightening.

"Oh, silver! bless your heart—why the silver is

you!

your mother's family filled great chests. And the house you were born in—you don't remember, I suppose—why, you could put two or three great rooms into the hall. Ah! that hall, child—it was filled with pictures, and statues, and stags' antlers, and in Christmas times whole trees stood in pots, that were banked up together like a garden. Then the rooms were so beautiful, with splendid hangings. In one of them your mother had a window of stained glass put in. That window, child—I used to think of heaven when I went in, and the sun was shining. Such colors as fell over the floor and over the bed I never could describe; but you, poor child, never saw them, for your father died in a year after you were born, and your mother couldn't abide staying in that house at all. So she moved away, and not long after died, leaving a will, in which when the matter of the property was settled, everything should come to you. That will—"

"Oh, Bentley! there's some one knocking," said the child, excitedly.

"Don't be frightened," replied the nurse, noticing that the child had grown pale. "I'll see who it is; nobody would come to harm us."

She opened the door. A woman stood there, clumsy in her folded shawl and large bonnet; but out of the crimped cap-border looked the flushed and honest face of Mistress Bridget.

"Sure it's half dead I am," she said, coming in and seating herself. "It's a hard race to come up them long stairs, an' I've no breath in me body at all. Oh! bliss me, but that's a pretty little girl there; indade, she looks as if she ought to be in a better place than this," and Bridget glanced around the old room.

"So she had, and so I hope she will, soon, please God," said Bentley, all the time looking with wide-opened eyes at her strange visitor.

"Well, the matter I've come to see ye on is jist this. There's a man boards where I live, an' he's a broker as kapes a little shop jist opposite. A mighty fine man he is, and as like me poor masher that died of his own accord as two paces. So to-night he met me, and axes me would I go to the place what he'd writ down on a card for me, an' give the lady this? So I says, yis; an' here I be."

Bentley's heart beat fast, as, undoing the slight wrappings, she recognized the miniature.

"And is there nothing to pay?" she asked.

"Not a stiver; on the contrary, he paid me for the comin'. An' now I'm risted, I'll be goin'."

"No, no; take some cakes, and let me pour you a cup of hot tea," said little Catharine.

"Ah! an' isn't it the ledly she is?" asked Bridget, an honest admiration lighting up her face, as she helped herself to a cake, still standing to go.

"She's a good child," Bentley said, admiringly; and clutched the locket nervously, a strange commingling of hope and fear thrilling her whole frame. When Bridget had gone, her breath came quick, and the little girl felt her hand grow alternately hot and cold. Some terrible agitation possessed her.

"Now, dear, I'll tell you something," she said, in answer to her mute appealing. "In that locket—if nobody has found it, and I think no one has—is your mother's will. I can't explain all to you now. Only I can tell you that I have suffered for years such agonies, such tortures as none can describe, for I lost this miniature!"

"You, Bentley?" exclaimed the child.

"I; your dear mother intrusted it to my care when she died, and from that moment I carried it with me as a miser carries his gold. It was always a mystery to me how I lost it; but oh! my child, what have I not suffered! When the matter had got through chancery—because of the great lawyer your mother had appointed, who was your own father's brother—there were you cut off from everything, because they said no will was made, and in your case it was necessary to establish you in your fortune. How I agonized and prayed and made a vow that, God helping me, I would devote my whole life to you! Every day since then, and many hours dur-

ing the day, have I prayed to God that I might have this locket restored to me. Something told me that I must bring you over to America; so I sold everything, and taking my little fortune, brought you here. Not a cent of the money that came to me from the sale of my property have I touched from that day to this. It is out at interest, and was to be all yours, to educate you, and help you in case I never found the miniature. Oh! truly God is good, and it all seems like a wonderful miracle—a wonderful miracle. Yes, if nobody knows, if nobody has stolen it, Catharine, you are a lady this minute!"

"Oh, Bentley, Bentley! can it be?" cried the little girl, all amazement.

"Yes; and though I don't quite remember the secret of the spring, which is a curious one, yet I dare say I shall when I get to work. Have you ever seen rice paper, Lady Catharine?"

"That the Chinese paint their pictures upon? Oh, yes; so soft, thin and white."

"And durable, dear," said Bentley, looking at the case. "Well, your mother had the will written on that kind of paper, before witnesses—that is, me, my husband, who was alive at the time, and your father's brother, poor man—and placed in the back here, as you will soon see. He is dead, too, for he lived only six months after he gained the case that gave the money to the wrong people on account of the missing will. There, I have loosened it a little; see—but, oh! I never thought. Suppose some one else has found it? It takes all the strength from me just to think of it."

Soon the case was opened, and there, fresh as if just folded, just written upon, was the important piece of delicate paper, upon which the fortune of the child depended.

"Now," cried the good woman, lifting her streaming eyes heavenward, "now we can take the money I've been saving so miserly, and buy you some beautiful dresses, and we'll find a boarding-place and live like people; and perhaps, my lady—for I must call you my lady now—we shall go to England, though I shouldn't wish it, save to shame the people who have wronged you so."

"And who wronged poor mamma so terribly. No, Bentley, I never wish to see them, for I should not be happy. Let us stay in this country where they can't trouble us. Why, doesn't it seem like a dream?" cried the child, clasping her hands.

CHAPTER XV.

AN APPARTITION.

"TIM?"

"Yis, sir."

"I wish you would see that Mrs. Lattison has a carriage by ten."

"Yis, sir."

"And, Tim?"

"Yis, sir."

"Did you do as I wished you to, last night?"

"Sure I did, sir, and I found me young sir going into a gambling establishment—and I made so bowld as to tap him on the shoulder, and tell him he was overlooked sure."

"And what did he say?"

"Sure an' it was an illigant rage he got into—and not at all complimentary to ye wid his tongue was he."

"That don't trouble me at all. Don't forget about the carriage," and the broker was gone.

"Oh! murder!" cried Tim, turning his eyes to the ceiling.

"What's got over ye now?" exclaimed Bridget.

"Sure the man he's mas'her an' mistress both," was the reply. "He does nothin' but order, and to tell the truth, I think Mrs. Lattison is goin' to marry him."

"Git out wid ye, man—haven't ye more manners than to mate two who ain't equals?"

"Bridget," and he crouched as he spoke, sit-

ting with his elbows on his knees, and his chin in his hands, "d'ye bel'ave the dead iver come back?"

"Whist! what do ye be wanting to talk nonsense for?" ejaculated Bridget, pausing in her ironing.

"Because, if ever I saw the eyes of Mistor Harrison, and heard his voice, it is been this blessed day."

"What do ye mane, 'Tim?" queried Bridget, who was not without superstitious fears.

"It was this morning as I came down stairs to light the fires. Over the glass door, there, as I looked up, I saw his face."

"The master's? Ye must 'ave been dr'aming."

"No—it wasn't dr'aming I was, though when I saw him, I shut me eyes and looked him full in the face, for I were that trimblin' I'd no command over me nerves."

"It's all nonsense, it is," said Bridget, giving a hurried glance around.

"Thin he called me—an' I didn't went for fright—an' I shook like a lafe a-laying on the ground—an' of a sudden the door bounce-d open, and thin—"

"Did ye see the master?" cried Bridget, her voice altered.

"No—an' sure it was the broker."

"I'd like to know what you mane, by frightening an honest woman like me, then, wid yer make-believe stories," exclaimed Bridget, angrily.

"It wasn't no make-believe, I tell ye," responded Tim. "Outside it was the master, inside the broker, and I'm afeard the avil one had to do wid it."

"But ye might 'a' knowed by his great beard that it wasn't Mr. Harrison."

"So you may say, but only the top of his face did I behowld, for ye see the glass is set in high. The saints protect us, but here comes that boy."

It was Henry Lattison. White as a statue—with lips held open as if by violence—eyes bloodshot—he strode angrily in.

"Tim, what is this absurd nonsense?" he asked, stormily.

"Axing your pardon," said Tim, "I don't sense ye."

"Why, they say that my mother has gone to be married to that broker, and that you know all about it."

"Howly saints!" ejaculated Tim, "what'd I know? Gone to git married?"

"Yes; didn't you order the carriage, stupid?"

"An' was it for that? Oh! the howly saints forbid! Sure a suspicion of it come over me brain, but I niver dr'amed it was true, niver."

The boy strode up and down in a white heat, his wrath making furnaces of his eyes. "I'll pay him off!" he ejaculated in anzy snatches—"I'll shoot him as true as there's a heaven."

"He's got the Lattisons' blood in him," whispered Bridget in terror—"there'll be trouble now."

"Ye'd best be quiet, till ye git cool," she said, as Tim darted out of the door.

"Quiet! I'll kill him," cried the boy, in a low, hoarse undertone. "Since that infernal rascal has been here, there's no peace in the house. Why must we all bend down and worship him because of my mother's—" folly, he would have said, but he had never so spoken of his mother, and he recollected that he was in the presence of servants. Bridget's bell rung and she hurried up-stairs into the front parlor, where sat a timid little woman, who was trembling like a leaf. It was Frank Reynolds's wife.

"Bridget, do you know anything of this affair?" she asked.

"Not a word," she replied, "saving what I heard jist now from Master Henry."

"There will be some desperate trouble, I fear," faltered Mrs. Reynolds. "Frank went out as white as a sheet, and declared he would horsewhip or shoot that man."

"Do ye mane the broker?" queried Bridget.

"Yes," and the timid woman shivered.

"Are ye certain they have gone to get married?" queried Bridget.

"So Henry told me a few moments ago; the boy was half wild."

"And who told him?"

"Mr. Sylvester."

"Sure, I thought so," said Bridget, tossing her head archly. She saw with her cooler judgment that this was doubtless a plan of the rejected suitor to put the life of his rival in danger or subject him to the humiliation of chastisement.

"It's meself is thinkin' that Mrs. Lattison is too much the leddy to go off like that," said Bridget, slowly. "I've known her longer nor you have," she added, as if in apology for the free expression of her opinion, "an' altho' she might be p'ased wid this man for looking so like Mistor Harrison that was her husband, yit she'd niver go no farder, I'm certain—an' as to runnin' off wid him, that's a propriety as she'd not be guilty of by any manes. I belave it's Mr. Sylvester's doin's, as iverybody knows that Mrs. Lattison wo't have no word to say to him anyhow, and I think that the mistress is gone on some business of her own that ain't anybody else's, noway. If I may be pardoned for axing, which way did Mistor Reynolds take?"

"He has driven round to the churches—oh! I hope he won't overtake them if it should be so."

"You are frightened, Mrs. Reynolds—but sure I think there's no need. It's not to any church she's gone, or ye may be certain I'd know somethin' about it. And there's Miss Ella come home from her visit in the country—so I must go down and kane the child from hearin' the silly, bad news."

Henry was still walking like a chained tiger to an fro. Bridget saw Ella safely inside her chamber, and left her with the words that her mother would soon come home. Entering the kitchen just as Tim had dashed in again, she read the good news in his face.

"The broker is been in 'is shop all day; hurrah!" he cried, as he entered.

"Are you sure of that?" queried Henry.

"An' isn't it sure I am? It's meself has bin there an' quistioned him."

"What! you didn't tell him—" began Henry, with knit brows.

"I telled him nothing that wouldn't bear the tellin'—be aisy on that score. But I'm sure of the one thing—he's not gone off to be married."

"What under heaven did Sylvester mean?" queried Henry, as he hurried from the room.

"He meant to make ye as much trouble as he could," muttered Tim, in an undertone.

The true reason for Mrs. Lattison's absence was this: Harvey Ward, a down-town merchant, had formerly been somewhat connected in business matters with Harrison. He had formed a most exalted opinion of the young man, and the news of his violent death had given him a shock from which he did not recover for a long time. One morning, when almost ill from over-fatigue, he had gone down to his counting-room, where he found himself quite unable to transact business. His weakness grew upon him so fast, that he had serious thoughts of sending for a carriage and returning home. At that moment one of his clerks announced that a gentleman wished to see him.

"What name?" he asked.

"The gentleman did not wish to give his name. The merchant considered for a short time, and then said he might enter. In another moment a tall man stood before him, enveloped in a cloak.

"Whom have I the pleasure of seeing?" asked the merchant.

The hat was lifted, the cloak collar lowered. Good heavens! had the grave given up its dead?—for there surely was the face of the drowned merchant, Lattison. He still spoke not, but stood composedly, while the old merchant slid back in his chair, his face growing gray, his eyes flinching. At length the figure took a letter from some pocket and laid it on the table, following the movement with instant wordless departure. It was fully five minutes before the old man moved, so struck into sudden ter-

ror was he by this, as he thought, apparition. Then rushing out into the store, he cried: "Did any of you see that man?"

"Yes, I did," and "I did," three or four of the clerks made answer.

"Who did he look like? Who was he?" This time he addressed Johnson, his confidential clerk.

"I was a little taken aback, sir," was the reply, "for I thought I saw a resemblance to"—the merchant's eyes nearly started out of his head—"to Mr. Lattison, sir."

"So you saw it—by Jove, I don't know what to think," said the old man, bewilderedly, looking vaguely out into the street. "I don't know what to think. And by the way, I was ill before he came—quite ill. It has all gone now. I've a great mind to follow him."

"But did he say nothing?" asked another clerk, his nephew.

"Speak—no—he didn't speak—but—I forgot—he left a letter on the table."

"A letter on the table?" three or four spoke at once.

"Yes, Johnson, we'll go in and see what it is. I declare my nerves are so shaken that I'm scarcely myself. Johnson, I'll depute you to read the letter," he said, as the two left the clerks speculating, and entered the little office. The letter still lay on the green baize cloth. The merchant seated himself and tapped the sides of his arm-chair while he waited, all expectation, as the clerk slowly unfolded the missive and, preparatory to reading it, lifted his eye-glass.

"Not much here," he said, smiling a little, "but it is very strange. Shall I read it?"

"By all means," was the quick reply.

"7th Aug., 18—

"MR. HARVEY WARD:—Do not sell your shares in the O. mines—now considered worthless—for any amount. My papers are yet safe. Tell my wife to look at the back of my secretary over the second door for a small brass-headed tack. If she presses that, a cavity will be disclosed containing the true papers. I always had faith in those shares. Arrange with her to make them over to you, and secure in her name my part of that property which will soon be of immense value. Do not speak of this to any one but those in whom you have the strictest confidence."

"Really, really! very strange! very singular!" exclaimed the merchant, leaning forward, his face quite pale. "Why! I would have sold that property for a shilling yesterday. This is something supernatural, Johnson. It makes my blood run cold."

At that moment some one wished to enter the office. It was an old business friend of his, who came to learn whether he would sell his shares in the O. mines. The merchant exchanged a significant glance with his confidential clerk, who left the counting-room. The offers were declined, and so were several. Being hard pressed, the gentleman declared that he had no faith in the property except as farming land—that he wished to move west and settle, and that was why he made the proposition. The merchant, however, still declined, and hurried home in a strange mood. That afternoon he wrote a note to Mrs. Lattison, requesting to see her on business of importance, and arranging that, as the matter was of a private and personal nature, she should come to his residence on the following day at ten in the morning. It was there, accordingly, that the widow went at the appointed time, taking with her, as the merchant had requested, some letters belonging to her husband. She was ushered into a large, light room, where sat a nervous-looking, white-haired individual, who saluted her, and almost immediately handed her a paper, saying as he did so, "Perhaps you know that handwriting."

"Certainly I do; it is Mr. Lattison's," she responded, with a show of grief.

"Will you oblige me by showing me some of his letters, that I may compare them?"

Mrs. Lattison complied with readiness. The signatures corresponded exactly. Harvey Ward then told the story and gave her the note to read. For a few moments she was strongly agitated.

"Did he ever tell you, madam, that he owned shares in this stock?"

"He never did."

"I learn to-day that the shares have gone up, unprecedentedly, and were your husband alive, he would be a richer man than before. Yesterday, but for this singular occurrence, I should have sold them for almost nothing. What does it mean?"

"Can the dead come back?" whispered the widow.

"The very question I asked yesterday. I protest it is the most remarkable thing of the kind I ever heard of."

"How was he dressed?"

"In a cloak and a cloth cap."

"That was not like him. He never wore a cloak, and a cap only in winter, and that of fur. Was he pale?"

"Very pale; in fact, fearfully so. I shudder when I think of it."

Mrs. Lattison shuddered too. She had dreamed of her husband for several nights past—ominous, foreboding dreams. She hurried back to the house, to the infinite relief of her son, her sister-in-law and Bridget. Going into her husband's private room, she took, not without a strange sensation of fear, the drawers from their places. Yes, there was the head of the brass tack. Pressing it, a door flew open, and in a cavity lay a folded paper. She took it out—it was the identical instrument of which her husband had spoken. Was the whole matter supernatural? Had he, the dead, he who had perished by his own hand, still the power of appearing at will—of watching over her? In vain she plied her bewildered mind with questions, nor was she aroused from her trance-like reverie till Ella broke into the room.

"Why, mother, I just heard—I was afraid—"

"What is the matter, child?" her mother asked.

"Why, Henry and uncle Frank, and uncle Frank's wife all thought you had gone away to get married. How absurd!" exclaimed Ella.

"To get married, child!" replied her mother, in tones of the utmost surprise. "Why, what can you mean?"

"It is true, mother; and what is the most laughable of all is, they said you were going to marry—the broker."

Mrs. Lattison's face became crimson. She bit her lip violently, but made no reply.

"I knew better, and so did Bridget. You don't know what a laugh we have over the whole affair—it was so ridiculous, you see."

Mrs. Lattison did not feel any inclination even to smile. The scenes through which she had so recently passed had brought before her mental vision with such distinctness the lover of her youth, the father of her children, that her very soul yearned to catch but a glimpse of his presence.

Meanwhile the pawnbroker sat musing in his little shop. The hallucination was gone from his brain—he was himself once more, looking over the map of the months that had passed.

"Strange mental conflicts," he murmured to himself, "have I been subjected to for this long, weary time. Now imagining myself one person, now another, and all the time conscious, as it were, of a double state of existence, the meaner predominating. But, thank God! this strange humor is wearing off, and since I have heard that good news about the mines, the mist has cleared from my brain, and I feel myself a man again, able to endure all things for the sake of those I love. I will, however, try myself yet a little longer; I will be positive that the malady has no more control of my will, and then I shall reveal myself. But how? Never mind that

now; I will first prepare the way for Bentley to come and board with us, for the poor soul feels such unbounded gratitude to me, that she would follow me to the world's end, I do believe; and the little heiress needs just such a home as that will be. Mr. Sylvester must take his traps and start; that most dutiful scapegrace son of mine must be taught a lesson or two, and my wife won again in short meter. Thank God! my intellect is clear—my fortune will be restored; and, leaving the false society of this sickening city, I will go back to the dear old Grove, purchase and fit it up as it once was, and we will live in peace and quietness."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REVELATION.

"I SAY, who is that Mistress Solemn who sits next to the madam with the beautiful child?" asked one of the boarders of the eldest hope of the house.

"That," said Henry, "is some old lady with magnificent expectations. I only wish the child in her care had the gloss of six years more on her yellow curls. Isn't she a little angel of a creature?"

"Are they Americans?"

"No, English; you might know by the way they carry themselves—so prim and straight. The child, they say, is a millionaire, or in a fair way of becoming one. She's been in chancery, I believe, and the old woman has supported her seven or eight years, by doing all sorts of work. Now there's something found by which the lawyers think she can get her rights, and give them a pretty plum, besides."

"How old is the child?"

"Oh! ten or eleven."

"And the old lady must be forty. Well, likely her nest is prettily feathered."

At that moment there was a singular sound proceeding from the hall.

"Hallo! what's the trouble?" cried the young man.

"It's the broker's voice as true as I'm a sinner."

The young men both sprung from the table and down the stairs. There, sure enough, was the broker, collaring the handsome Sylvester and dragging him along the hall to the steps, where, having administered a ferocious shaking, he threw him out on the pavement.

"What is this, sir?" cried Henry Lattison, aghast.

"Nothing, only I've been punishing a puppy for insulting your mother," returned the broker.

"You take a great deal upon yourself, it seems to me, sir. I am the proper person to attend to such matters."

"You should be," was the stern reply; "but one who is under moneyed obligations to another is not sufficiently his own master to take upon himself the right to defend any woman."

"Remember, you are in my house!" cried young Lattison, threateningly.

"I am in *your mother's* house, young man," was the cool reply.

"You have no right here," said the young man, quite angrily.

"I pay my board—and I don't pawn watches to do so, either," responded the broker, in a low, determined voice. "It is useless for you to talk; I wish to hear nothing from your lips. Take care that you do not provoke me to expose your conduct to your family, who little think of *some* things I could tell them."

The young man, though still crimson and shaking with anger, slunk away at this.

From this time forward it was plainly to be seen that the broker was the head man of that house. Not that he assumed anything or put on a blustering air; but, by a quiet, magnetic authority, he ruled not only the hostess, but her boarders. As for Mrs. Lattison, though she dared not confess it to herself, she was entirely absorbed in his presence. Since the broker had freed her from the insulting compliments that had become so odious to her, she

had felt her heart his captive. And then he looked so like her dear Harrison!

The papers were taken up to the merchant, and delivered into his keeping. Mrs. Lattison did not thrive under existing circumstances. Her face grew pale, and her movements listless. She sighed frequently—and sometimes started as she heard the deep tones of her eccentric boarder.

One day she sat in her room intent upon a letter which she had been long wishing to find time to write to her sister-in-law, when Ella burst into the room, pale, tearless and indignant. Sinking on a lounge, she gave a dry sob and buried her face in her hands. Mrs. Lattison arose, disturbed and frightened. "What does this mean?" she exclaimed, herself as pale as the girl.

"Mother," gasped Ella, "you must—you must turn that impertinent broker out of the house—indeed you must, he has insulted me."

Mrs. Lattison's eyes were ablaze as her daughter spoke thus. Her heart beat as if it would leap from her body.

"What did he say or do?" she asked, in a thick voice.

"He caught me as I was passing, caught and kissed me, and called me his little daughter."

"Ella—did he ever do this before?" her mother asked.

"Never—never! and I liked him so well, too. I broke away from him, although he cried out for me to stop and he would explain, but I was too angry," and the poor girl sobbed unrestrainedly.

"This is too much!" said Mrs. Lattison, unable to restrain her tears at the fancied insult. "Come and go with me, Ella, and confront this wicked man; he must leave the house immediately."

She raised her eyes; the "wicked man" stood before her, just inside the door, audaciously smiling.

"What, sir—do you dare to enter my room?" she cried, springing to her feet, confronting him—her eyes flashing like those of a tigress. "Oh! my husband—Harrison? why did you leave me? Alas! I know not whom to trust."

"My dear madam—what have I done?" asked the broker, innocently lifting his eyebrows.

"Taken advantage of a fatherless and unprotected girl. How dared you speak to my child in the manner you did?"

"I protest I do not see that I have been guilty of the least impropriety. I merely told her I loved her, and so I do. I have a right, I think. To you I say the same thing; I love you more than language can express. This young lady I took the liberty to kiss—by your leave, I will take the same sweet liberty with you."

"Sir, man! what do you mean? This language is audacious! This conduct is unbearable. If you do not leave me, sir, I shall call for help."

"But, madam—Mrs. Lattison—dear Coraline—"

"Will you leave the room? You exasperate me too much."

"No, madam. I make a solemn declaration that I regard this room and everything in it, even to mother and daughter, as my absolute property," returned the broker, with great composure.

"Mother, what does it mean? What will that horrid creature do next?"

"What can I do?" cried the startled woman, bursting into tears. Frank is not at home, neither is Henry. Hark!"

At that instant Henry dashed into the room, his cheeks ablaze.

"Am I to be ordered round by this fellow as if I were a dog?" cried Henry, bursting into the room.

"What now?" exclaimed his sister and mother.

"I met him on the stairs a moment ago. Says he, 'My boy, I wish you to carry a note for me to the exchange. I am in a particular hurry.' 'I don't go of errands,' I answered. 'Never mind, you go there for me,' he says, with the same authority as if he were my father. Now, mother, I want to know if

you encourage this fellow, as I have heard hinted more than once that you did."

"I—I encourage him?" faltered Mrs. Lattison.

"Yes, you. Don't look at him, mother, and I promise you you shall need no protector. I've been fast, I know, but I declare to you I'll break off every bad practice, if you will have nothing more to say to him. And to begin, I'll make a confession—I'll make a clean breast and get out of *his* clutches at any rate. Briefly then, he has my father's watch in his pocket.

"Good heavens!" cried his mother, "did he steal it?"

"No—I pawned it," replied the boy, with a gush of honest tears, "but I'll redeem it, I promise you I will."

"Let us hope it is his last freak of the kind," said a voice near them.

They looked up. Oh! what shrieks of joy, almost maddening to hear, and that brought the whole household round them—what tears, embraces, wild, unutterable raptures! Had the sea given up its dead? There stood the broker, but divested of false hair, false beard, and whatever else of false coloring he had assumed.

"Oh! Harrison, Harrison, my husband! how could you try me so?" sobbed the matron, her arms clinging about his neck.

"It is all over, my darling. Come, look up, my love, and say that you forgive me."

"Forgive you—I forgive everything; the bliss of beholding you again is too great! And you were the broker! and I—" she hid a blushing face in his bosom.

"You loved me for his sake," rejoined the husband and father. "Well, my little Ella, do you acknowledge now that I had a right to kiss you?"

"Yes, indeed, father!" exclaimed the happy girl, her face radiant with smiles.

"And to reprove you?" he turned to Henry, who held out his right hand, while the beauty of his new resolve brightened his eyes.

There were but few of the household at home. Tim and Bridget in the kitchen knew nothing about the matter. Tim's principal occupation of late was to smoke, lounge and talk about dreams and ghosts. Bridget had become so timid under this daily stirring of her fears, which yet had a strange fascination for her, that on every convenient occasion she turned the lock of the door leading into the street passage and put it into her pocket, to the great discomfort of store-porters, milkmen and others.

At this very hour, Tim was relating to Bridget the experience of an acquaintance who had been known to hold audience with more than one intangible being.

"And pray, how do these—these sperrits look?" queried Bridget.

"Just as they do when they're a-livin'," was the reply, "barring that the clothes is a humbug and the thing is all air."

"Howly saints!" shrieked Bridget, and crash went the flat-iron across the room, coming within an inch of Harrison's temple as he opened the door, and with the smile of old, stood where Bridget alone could see him. Tim sat still, staring at his larger and better half, who, with distended eyeballs, her arms stretched forward, her teeth chattering, lay in a lump, crouching and moaning in broken Irish, in the middle of her huge clothes-basket into which she had fallen.

"The ghost! the ghost!" shrieked Bridget, pointing to the head of the household, who, seeing for what they took him, had great ado to keep from a shout of laughter, and stood undecided whether to

proclaim himself mortal or let the joke go on. Tim gave one scared glance, and with a cry the counterpart of Bridget's, or rather with a succession of yells, he bounded for the back door, but Bridget had the key in her pocket.

"Oh! howly mother, what'll I do wid meself?" he howled in agony; "sure I'll never git over this." His teeth chattered—he held on to the lock of the door as if for dear life, and the perspiration rolled down his face. "Oh! Mr. Lattison, in the name of the howly Catholic church—the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins—the—the howly Catholic church—the—the howly Catholic church!" this time it was a shriek so prolonged and fearful, that Harrison, though convulsed with inward laughter at the ludicrous state of affairs, sprung over toward the cringing Irishman, and shook his senses into him.

For many minutes it was impossible to make the terrified couple believe that he was really flesh and blood; but when they did, Bridget picked herself out of the clothes-basket, and Tim moved reluctantly from the door, casting sheepish glances toward Bridget, who, now that her fright was over, broke into vehement sobs.

"Sure, an' it's glad I am, though I don't undherstand it at all, at all," she cried.

"Nor me 'ither," dolefully responded Tim.

Harrison explained to them his hallucination and its consequences. Their joy was unbounded, and their expression of delight original in the extreme.

Six years later, "the broker" sat in his easy-chair at the Grove, inditing a letter to his sister Anne. Two or three of the paragraphs ran as follows:

"You will be pleased to hear that the marriage ceremony passed off delightfully. Henry and little Lady Catherine, as we all call her, made a beautiful couple. They will call on you during their bridal tour. Tim, of whom you spoke, is still in my service, though he does little but sun himself and smoke his old black pipe. Bridget is as active as ever. My daughter Ella named her pretty child on Sabbath last. So look out to see a little Anne Lattison Gray, when you come on again. We are all at the dear old Grove, save Henry and his wife. It is more of a Paradise than ever, and after my short drives to the city, I am glad to get here and enjoy the sweets of home. My wife was looking over some old letters yesterday, and with a smile full of meaning, handed me one. It bore the appearance of having been crushed and then resmoothed, and was, in fact, the identical letter which, in my utter despondency and something like insanity, I wrote so long ago. That was a strange, wild freak of mine. I often look back on its consequences with the wonder how I could ever have accomplished it. Whenever I meet uncle Reynolds, to this day, he shakes his head and pats his brow with an ominous forefinger. When I meet Sylvester, he frowns and crosses over. They are both as harmless as lambs, though I incline to think, the old uncle has never quite forgiven me for turning up again, and would not be sorry if I were to give him a chance to attend my funeral.

"The thousand and one rumors that followed my 'coming to life' have died away. My wife is worthy of my noblest regards, having been only guilty of falling in love with her own husband the second time; and I do not think I shall ever sigh to sleep 'where the tide runs deepest and strongest.' So allow me to subscribe myself,

Yours, truly,

"HARRISON LATTISON."

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